

A  
TREATISE  
OF  
Sacramental - Covenanting  
WITH  
CHRIST:  
SHEWING

The Ungodly their Contempt of *CHRIST*,  
in their Contempt of the *Sacramental-  
Covenant*.

And calling them (not to a Profanation of this Holy  
Ordinance, but) to an Understanding, Serious, Entire De-  
dication of themselves to God in the *Sacramental Covenant*,  
and a Believing Commemoration of the Death of *CHRIST*.

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Written by *J. RAWLET*, B. D. Author of the  
*Christian Monitor*.

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**The Sixth Edition.**

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*With a Preface chiefly designed for the satisfaction of  
Dissenters, and to exhort all Men to Peace and Unity.*

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L O N D O N:

Printed for *Samuel Manship*, at the Ship against the  
*Royal Exchange* in *Cornhill*, 1710.





P R E F A C E

I have not to trouble the Reader with any long  
Account of the occasion of my Writing this plain  
case (which was composed and first published in  
1704) nor with the many alterations or additions  
I have since made to it: since I was assured, as to  
it, I could do no more. I have only added a few  
pages, which I have done, because I thought it  
worth to add a few more, by way of introduction to the  
Chapter. The Title is, I think, sufficiently explanatory  
of the Design of it, in general, and particularly of the  
contents thereof, which I have endeavored to make  
as plain as possible. The Holy Communion, as they  
approve themselves to be the true Principles of the  
Church, and have recommended it to the whole  
of them. But my chief intention is to show the  
reasons why I am so much forward to recommend it to  
Schools, and especially to the Officers, and to the  
any body, and to the whole, from their great interest  
to this Holy Ordinance. I wish I knew as well the  
reasons why those who would draw them into a  
question, I am sure, would be of great service to  
I have answered in the Book as little as I could, and  
in needful to make the matter plain, because I found  
the People, for most take things in their own  
sense, and do not think of the reasons. I have  
not now any more to say, but I have added a few  
pages to the end of the Book, of some things  
I have thought fit to add, and which I have  
thought fit to add.

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# THE P R E F A C E.

**I** Intend not to trouble the Reader with any particular Account of the occasion of my Writing this plain Treatise (which was Composed and first Published many Years ago) nor with Apologies for its plainness, or any other fault that may be found with it; since I endeavour, as well as I could, to fit it to the Design I had in making it. What that was, I need say little here, having already said so much to that purpose, by way of Introduction in the first Chapter. The Title it self may sufficiently inform him, that the Design of it is to exhort and perswade Men carefully to prepare themselves, and then with due Reverence and Seriousness to frequent the Holy Communion, as they would approve themselves to be the true Disciples of the Lord Jesus, who hath commanded us to Do this in remembrance of him. But my chief Intention in writing this Preface, is to do what I am capable toward the removing of those Scruples, and answering those Objections, which may hinder any honest and well-meaning Persons from their Attendance to this Holy Ordinance; such I mean as are oft put into their Heads, by those who would draw them into a Separation from our Church. Some Objections of another Nature I have answered in the Book it self, but did not then think it needful to meddle with these, because I found not that the People, for whose sake chiefly it was first writren, were much troubled with them: Nor do I now intend to launch out into any large Discourse about these Matters, which have fill'd so many Books of Controversie; after all which, I dare not pretend to say any thing new in the Case; only I shall suggest a few plain things, which fully satisfy my own Mind in these Points, and may through God's Blessing give



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*the same Satisfaction to those who are truly willing and prepared to receive it. To such I mean who through the Fault of their Education, or Company, may be fall'n into these Mistakes, but yet are not obstinately fix'd in them, nor gone over into the way of Separation, but are of an humble, teaching Temper; will be glad to see their Error, and to revoke it; having so much regard to the Peace and Unity of the Church, that they are very desirous in all things to maintain Communion with us in the Publick Worship, so far as they are convinced they may lawfully do it. To such as these, I shall now apply my Discourse with all the clearness and mildness that I possibly can: my business is only to instruct and perswade, not to expose or willingly to exasperate any body: for I always reckon that the raising of Mens Passions, is a very improper way for the rectifying of their Judgments. The two most common Objections against receiving the Communion in our Parish Churches, are (1.) On Account of the Gesture then used. Because we have, as they call it a Mixo Communion.*

*Object. 1. "Some are not willing to come to the Communion, because they are required to receive it Kneeling. And this they judge unlawful, for such Reasons as these. (1.) Our Saviour has not commanded it, nor did the Apostles, that we read, use it. (2.) It seems unsuitable to the Nature of this Ordinance, which is an Holy Feast. (3.) It hath been abused by Papists in their Idolatrous Worship of the Host. (4.) They look upon the imposing of it as an Injury to their Christian Liberty. To answer these in order Briefly.*

*(1.) As to the first Reason, That it was not commanded by our Blessed Saviour, nor used by his Apostles at the first Institution of this Sacrament.*

*Ans. (1.) Neither did our Saviour enjoin any other Gesture, whether Standing or Sitting: by this Argument therefore neither would any of these be lawful. But here you will presently reply, That he and his Apostles used another posture, and their Example ought to determine us. Let*



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us then take it for granted that they received it in the same Gesture, which they used at their Meals; this is commonly taken to be Leaning along, and therefore if we will strictly follow their Example, we ought to use the same. If it be replied, That now Sitting is our Table posture, and therefore may be most fitly used instead of Leaning. Pray then bethink you well, if you reckon there is power enough in bare Custom, so far to alter the Gesture, viz. from Leaning to Sitting, why may it not then as well change it to Kneeling? Since, as it is our custom to Sit at our common Tables, so is it the custom of our Church to Kneel at this Holy Table. And what is much more, we have also the Authority of our Superiors both in Church and State obliging us hereto. If it be said, that Kneeling is not so proper to come in the room of Leaning as Sitting is, on Account of the Nature of this Ordinance, we shall speak to that presently by it self.

(2.) But suppose that our Saviour and his Apostles had Sitten at the first Celebrating of this Ordinance, yet does not this oblige us to use the same Gesture; since a bare Example, though of Christ and his Apostles, is not always a Rule for the guiding of our Practice, that therefore we must do this and thus, merely because they did so. Example without Precept, lays nor any necessary Obligation upon us. Christ's own Example certainly binds no farther then he designs it should do so, and what reason have we to imagine that he design'd it should bind us in this or that Instance, where he has never given us the least Intimation of any such Design. Many things we know there are in the Life of Christ, which it is so far from being our Duty, that it would be Presumption and Sin to offer as an Imitation of them; as in his Miraculous Works. Other things there are of a Civil Nature, in which to endeavour an Imitation of him, would be weakness and folly; as to cloath our selves in a seamless Coat, because he wore such a one, with other things of the like Nature. But to come nearer to our purpose; and to instance in the Circumstances of Religious Worship. Suppose we had never read that our Saviour used any other posture in Prayer but standing, would that, think you make it

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unlawful for us to Kneel in Prayer? No more than for ought I see, does his Sitting at his Last Supper make it unlawful for us to receive it Kneeling. Again, as to the other Sacrament, that of Baptism, tho' the Apostles generally used Dipping, yet you do not I suppose, think we are thereby obliged to use the same custom. And why should you condemn in one Instance, what you allow in another of the same nature? But to come to this Sacrament in self: Are there not several other Circumstances which our blessed Saviour and his Apostles used at the first Institution of it, which you who made this Objection do not think your selves bound to observe? As particularly in respect of the time; it was at Evening, and is called a Supper, and yet I hope you do not think it unlawful to receive it at Noon. And surely the Gesture in which is as much a Circumstance as the time when or the place where they received it. But if you answer, There may be a particular Reason given for their taking that time, viz. Because it was at the Paschal Supper, which used to be eaten in the Evening; even so for the very same reason might this Sacrament at first be received in a Table-posture, because they were now at Supper, and so continued in the same Posture; but this without any design to bind us to the same Posture, any more than to the same time, for any thing we can find. For our Lord speaks not a word of it that we read in any of the Evangelists, nor yet St. Paul, when speaking of this Sacrament, he tells us, He delivered what he received of the Lord, 1 Cor. 11. 23, &c. So that we have hence great reason to conclude, that whatever Gesture was used by our blessed Saviour and his Apostles at the first Institution of this Sacrament, yet are we no way obliged to an imitation of the same; but either one or another may be used, as the custom of the Church, or the prudence of our Rulers shall direct.

Yea, (Lastly) and to this purpose may we much more reasonably plead the Example of our blessed Saviour, since both he himself and his Apostles were wont commonly to comply with the innocent usages of the Jewish Church, even in matters pertaining to Religious Worship, for which yet there

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was no expresse Command given in the Old Testament, as might easily be shewn in many Instances frequently urged by Learned Men; who also observe, that even the Holy Sacraments themselves which our Lord appointed, do bear a very near resemblance to some Rites and Customs that were much in use amongst the Jews, to shew how little he affected Innovation in such matters. And thus we know the Apostle Paul argues in a case much of this Nature, 1 Cor. 11. 16. If any Man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor the Churches of God. The custom of the Church will have a great Influence over a peaceable Temper.

But (4.) It may be urged, that Sitting is most agreeable to this Ordinance, as it is a Feast, shewing that freedom we have in Communion with Christ, by whom we are entertained at this Holy Supper.

Ans. (1.) You find no such thing said in Holy Scripture; Why then should you argue at this rate? Is not this contrary to your own Profession at other times? And I might truly tell you that in the other Sacrament you do not observe this your own Rule; for few or none that I know, except the Anabaptists, use dipping or plunging over the Head in Baptism; and yet we read in Scripture how this represents our being Buried with Christ; and raised again to newness of life. And yet because this is not of the Essence of the Ordinance, you can follow the custom of the Church; and why then should you be more scrupulous in the present Case, where you have nothing like so good a pretence?

But (2.) Tho' this be a Feast, yet it is not a Common but a Spiritual Feast, and therefore you cannot thence rationally argue that you must use the same Gesture that we do at our common Tables. Rather when we consider by whom we are here entertained, the greatest Reverence and Humility doth well be seem us in all our Carriage and Behaviour, which yet is no way inconsistent with the most near and intimate Communion with our God and Saviour, in the exercise of our Graces and receiving an abundant increase of them.

As, Consider especially what Transactions there are betwixt pious Souls and their Redeemer at this Holy Feast, and  
you



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you will acknowledge that Kneeling is a Gesture no way unsuitable thereto. Here we do solemnly oblige our selves to be Christ's Disciples, and here he Seals to us the Pardon of our Sins, and gives us Title to Eternal Glory. And is it any way unsuitable for a Subject to Kneel, whilst he is taking the Oath of Allegiance before his Prince? Or when his Prince bestows on him a Pardon, or a Patent for some great Honour, is it unjust for him to receive these Kneeling? So that consider this Sacrament under these Notions, you see how agreeable this Gesture is to the Nature and Design of it. To this let me only add, that even at the receiving of the Holy Elements from the hand of Christ's Minister, we do joyn with him in that most Solemn Prayer, That the Body and Blood of Christ may preserve our Soul and Body unto Everlasting Life. And can anything be more decent, than to Kneel, when we are thus offering up our Prayers to God?

(3.) It is urged, That the Papists brought in this Custom, and do abuse it their Idolatrous Worship of the Host, as they call it, and we by this means do seem to joyn with them, and confirm them in their Error.

Ans. (1.) This has never been yet proved, so far as I have seen, that the Papists first brought in Kneeling at the Sacrament. For I think its undeniable from all the Records we have of the usage of the Primitive Christians in the purer Ages of the Church (long before Popery, and that most absurd Doctrine of it, Transubstantiation, was ever known in the World) that they used the same Gesture in receiving the Communion, which they did in other parts of Religious Worship, which generally was Standing. And consequently afterwards when Kneeling came in use at their Prayers, then most probably was Kneeling at this Sacrament practiced also. Nor, as I take it, even amongst them, do they intend so much to express their Worship of the Consecrated Bread, by Kneeling when they receive it, as by their Adoring at the Elevation of it by the Priest; which is I reckon immediately after the Consecration.

2. But let them do as they will, What does it concern us? Except we shall imagine that nothing which Papists have abused

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*used may be lawfully used by others, even when 'tis separate from that abuse; which surely no Man will be so unreasonable as to assert. If they have used to Kneel in Idolatrous Worship, may not we therefore Kneel in the Worship of the true God? If it be said, That we confirm them in their Error. This also is said without reason. Since the Judgment of our Church is sufficiently known in this point; and in the Rubrick after the Communion it is most expressly declared,*  
*" That the reason of our Kneeling is to signifie our humble and grateful acknowledgment of the Benefits given by Christ to all Worthy Receivers, but not any way intended as an Adoration of the Sacramental Bread and Wine, which were Idolatry to be abhorred of all Faithful Christians: with more to that purpose. And this I think may sufficiently vindicate our Church from being any way guilty of confirming the Papists in their gross mistakes in this matter, or in any the ill consequences of those mistakes against all which she doth so plainly protest. I might also further add, that beside our selves, there are multitudes of Protestants as well as Papists, who receive the Sacrament Kneeling, viz. all the Lutheran Churches, whilst its commonly said, that the Pope himself receives Sitting.*

*(Lastly) It may be objected, That this is an abridgment of our Christian liberty, to be confined to one particular posture: Since Christ left it free, why should we be bound up to one more than another? The Apostle having bidden us to stand fast in the liberty Christ hath given us.*

*Ans. (1.) In Answer to this, pray consider, That supposing it was a fault in your Rulers, to confine you to one particular Gesture; yet does this no way make it unlawful for you to use that Gesture. Let us then take it for granted, which I think is hitherto evident, that Kneeling is as lawful as Standing or any other Gesture; if then it be so before its commanded, I hope you are not so weak as to think that the Command alters the Nature of it, and makes it unlawful, as being an encroachment upon your liberty, for by that reason you ought to do it if it was forbidden, that so you might maintain your liberty. And what confusion would this produce? Christ ha-*  
*ving*



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ving left it free to use this Gesture or that, surely the command of my Superiors may very well determine my choice, without doing me the least Injury. If you still urge that you must by no means betray your Christian Liberty.

(2.) Consider, This is not a liberty wherein Christianity is at all concerned one way or other: Whether it be granted or denied, it's no prejudice to Religion; which may either way be maintain'd very well. So that the Apostles Injunction reaches not to your Case. For he is speaking of that liberty from the Bondage of Jewish Ceremonies, which Christ had vouchsafed, but yet some Judaizing Christians opposed it, and zealously Preached up the necessity of observing them, to the great prejudice of the Gospel and the corrupting of Religion: And this after the Apostles had expressly determined the contrary. But what's all this to our Rulers determining of Circumstances that relate to the Worship of God, whether as to Time, Place, Habit, Gesture, or the like? As in the present Case, when several Gestures are equally lawful, and our Rulers think it very Orderly and Decent that some one should be generally observed, and judge Kneeling to be at least as convenient as any other, and therefore enjoyn it to be used. What hurt is it either to us, to Religion, or to our Liberty, to be confined to the use of this Posture? Surely our rendring of Christian Obedience in such Cases, is no Encroachment upon our Christian Liberty. Nor is there any manner of consequence, that because we must oppose the corrupt Doctrines and Impositions of false Teachers, such that contradicted the Governors of the Church, therefore we may disobey the lawful Commands of those who have Authority over us.

Let it be well consider'd, That none do more abridge themselves of their Christian Liberty in this Case, than they who through Weakness, or Prejudice, take up a conceit, that only this or that particular Gesture is lawful, and there confine themselves only to that, when neither God, nor their Superiors do so confine them. By such a false Judgment does a man lose his Liberty, and not barely by being restrain'd, as to his external practice, whilst his Judgment is left free; as in the Case before us. My Superiors think fit to enjoyn Kneeling, but without



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without requiring me to declare that I think this Gesture necessary in itself, and all others unlawful. In this they leave me to the freedom of my own judgment. And in my judgment suppose is, That both this, and Standing and Sitting are all Lawful. Whereupon I can cheerfully submit to what is required; and also if I go into France, where Standing is used, or into other Countries where another Gesture is used, I can readily comply with one or the other, and so do enjoy the benefit of my Christian Liberty. Whereas he who judges only one of these, supposes Sitting to be lawful, does thereby restrain his own liberty, and makes that necessary which Christ never commanded; that unlawful which he never forbid; and so are more liable to that charge of adding to the word, than our Rulers are, whilst for order sake, they single out one amongst several indifferent things, and enjoin the observance of it.

Object. 2. The next common Objection is against A mixt Communion, as some stile it. Many will not Communicate in their Parish Churches, because some are admitted there of such bad Lives as they reckon will defile those who hold Communion with them.

Ans. (1.) I would desire such to consider that by the Rules of our Church, no Persons either grossly ignorant, or of scandalous lives, ought to be admitted to the Holy Communion. None should come till they are Confirmed, or are fit for Confirmation, of which their own Minister is to be judge. And those whom he knows to be notoriously Vicious, he is to warn them by no means to presume to come till by their Repentance and Amendment of Life, they have given satisfaction to the Congregation; as may be seen in the Rubrick before the Communion. Such as these, the Minister and Church-Wardens, if they know them, are obliged to present, that they may be proceeded against according to the Canons. And in the Exhortation before the Communion, the Minister does most solemnly warn all wicked Livers not to come to the Lord's Table, except they Repent of their Sins, and forsake them, shewing how great the danger of unworthy receiving; and those whom he knows to live in Malice, he is directed by the Rubrick, by no means to suffer them to come, till they are re-

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cenciled, if they are both obstinate. Whereby you may perceive what care the Church has taken in this particular. And though through the fault of particular persons, there may be a neglect of Discipline, yet I am apt to think that they who for this Reason do withdraw from the Church of England, will scarce find any Church in the Christian World with which they can more comfortably hold Communion, on account of the holiness of its Members.

(2.) Tho' I would not plead for any sinful Remissness, yet it cannot be expected, that in our own, or any other Nation, where Christianity is the Religion of the Country, there can be the same strict Discipline kept up, that was in the Primitive Times, when their number was much less, and when few, but sincerely good Men would profess Christianity, considering to what Persecutions that very Profession did oft times expose them. The Case now must needs be much different, when the Laws and Custom of the Country, oblige all Men to this Profession, which therefore they will readily make, but will not so readily be brought to lead such an holy and good Life, as is agreeable thereto. And after the greatest care and strictness, there will be Tares growing up with the Wheat. In a great House there will be Vessels of Dishonour, as well as Honour.

(3.) Suppose there are some Unworthy Communicants admitted to the Lord's Table, what hurt can this be to those who are duly prepared to come thither? No more, for ought I can discern, than it will hinder my relishing or digesting my Bodily Food, that there is one sits by me who has a weak Stomach and bad Digestion. Nor do I know any good reason, why it should more defile, or any way prejudice me to receive the Communion with those who are unfit for it, than to join with them in Prayers, Hearing, or any other Religious Office. Whilst I partake not of other Mens Sins, surely I may join with them in the performance of necessary Duties.

But here is commonly alledged that of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 5. 11. With such a one, no not to eat: viz. Not with an openly profane person. For Answer, This Text is by many good Expositors judged to forbid our familiarity with wicked Men



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Men in our common Conversation. That we should not make them our intimate Friends and Associates; that so we may both secure our selves from being infected, and may also bring them to shame, whose Company we avoid; as the Jews of old did that of a Leper. And indeed there is much more danger of Infection by familiarity in daily Converse, than by joining with them in Religious Duties. But should we grant that this Text enjoins the removal of notoriously wicked persons from their Religious Assemblies, as some other Texts more plainly do, yet does it chiefly concern those who have power so to remove them; those in the Church, who have Authority for that purpose. But surely private Persons are only thereby obliged to do their Duty in their places, toward the removal of such corrupt Members. And here I would desire those who are most forward to make this Objection, to consider seriously whether they have done their Duty in this respect. Have you gone to those whom you know to be scandalous Livers, and with plainness and meekness admonish'd them of their Faults; and if they have prov'd obstinate, have you according to the method of the Gospel, taken with you some others to assist you in this work? And if still your Endeavours have been ineffectual, have you acquainted the Church, those especially with whom the Government of it is intrusted, that they might proceed against such obstinate Offenders, according to their deserts? If you have not done this, why do you accuse others for their neglect, whilst your selves are so guilty? Why do you blame Ministers for receiving bad Men to the Communion, whilst they perhaps know nothing of their Crimes? For it is not enough sure, for any Man's Condemnation, that he is in the general said to be an ill liver, whilst there is no particular Crime laid to his charge, nor any body comes in to give information and proof of his Vicious Carriage. But if you say you have done your duty, and yet the Offender is still continued in the Church: Surely then you may be satisfied, that this will not be laid to your charge, since you are no way guilty of it. And why should you fear to suffer for another Man's Sin which you do not promote? Or think you shall want the Blessings promis'd to the worthy



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worthy Communicant, because without your fault, there are some unworthy Persons admitted there. What appearance of Reason is there, or what ground from Scripture, that upon this account you should either neglect your Duty, or withdraw from your Fellow-Christians into any Separate Assembly? Pray take good heed, lest whilst you seem afraid of the Company of such Sinners, you your selves do not run into the commission of a great Sin; breaking the Peace of the Church, dividing the Members, and disobeying those who are set over you in the Lord, to admonish and guide you.

Lastly, I shall only recommend one thing more to your Consideration. When you see one whom you look upon as a great Sinner at the Communion, how do you know but he is sincerely penitent, and firmly resolved from this time forward, to forsake his Sins, and amend his Life? For he hath been plainly warned by the Minister otherwise not to come there, and told that it is at his own great Peril if he come Impenitently. What though he hath often before been at the Communion, and soon after returned to his former Courses; yet how do we know but this may be the time wherein his Repentance is more deep and sincere, his Purposes more firm and steadfast than ever? Certainly that private Christian who does strictly examine himself, looking well to the state of his own Soul, and entertains such charitable hopes of his Brother, may, for all that I can see, come freely to Eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup; and does therein act much more agreeably to the Rules of the Gospel, than he that either wholly neglects the Duty, or separates from the Publick Congregation, because some whom he judges unworthy, are tolerated in it. And he that shall read impartially the Apostle Paul's Exhortation to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 11. will I think be of the same mind: where, though he severely taxes the great Disorders amongst them in their Administration of the Lord's Supper, yet there is not the least intimation, that the private Members of that Church ought to separate from it on account of them.

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And this I hope, may suffice, in answer to the two main Objections, which I chiefly intended to take notice of.

Obj. 3. Some perhaps there are, who may further Object against coming to the Communion, That we make use of the Common-Prayer in the Administration of it, and they for their part are not satisfied with the use of Forms.

Ans. I confess to me it seems very strange, that any who use to read the Holy Scriptures, and have the least measure of Knowledge, should make such an Objection as this. For Answer to which briefly, I shall desire them to consider, that in these Holy Scriptures, especially in the Old Testament, there are multitudes of Forms recorded. What else is the whole Book of Psalms (besides many others) which were used frequently by good Men of old in their Publick Worship of God. And, as I think is generally acknowledged on all hands, this Worship was frequented, and many of these Forms often used by our blessed Saviour himself, and his holy Apostles. That our Saviour gave his Disciples a Form, commanding them to use it as a Prayer, as well as for a Plat-form, is expressly declared in the Gospel.

And yet shall we think it unlawful for us to use that same Form, or another fram'd according to that Model? And some such Forms in the best and purest Ages of the Church, throughout the whole Christian World, down to this present Age, have been used by the most pious and holy Men, so far as History can inform us. At this day there is scarce any Church in all Christendom, but makes use of some Forms in their Publick Worship. Those learned and good Men, who were most instrumental in carrying on the Reformation in foreign Churches, have not only allow'd, but earnestly pleaded for such Forms, and accordingly more or less are they used in all Reformed Churches, especially in their Administration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. At least, there is not one of all those Churches that ever I heard of, which condemns the use of them as unlawful: no, nor I believe not any one Christian Writer for Fifteen Hundred Years and more after our Saviour. The Judgment and Practice of our first Reformers in this Kingdom, is sufficiently

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known: For by those Holy Men, Martyrs, and Confessors, was our Liturgy first Composed. And it seems very strange, that many of those who profess so much honour for their Memory, should yet have no greater esteem for their Labours, no more regard to their Example; but are ready some of them to run away from that as Popish, in which those Holy Men judged our Reformation from Popery chiefly to consist. Nay, the old Nonconformists in Queen Elizabeth's, King James's Days, and after, not only thought these our Prayers lawful, but some of the most eminent amongst them for Learning and Piety, such as Mr. Hilderham, Mr. Ball, &c. have strongly pleaded for them, called upon the People to a constant reverent Attendance upon them, and very smartly condemn'd those who have separated from them, as is to be seen in their Writings. Yea, the very same is at this day done by some of greatest note amongst them; and in several of their Books there are Forms of Prayer composed for Families and private Persons, which sufficiently shews their judgment. And some other of their Writers who seem most prejudiced against Forms, yet expressly tell us, they dare not say they are unlawful. Surely then he must have a brow of brass, that shall in this case oppose his own single judgment in a manner to the whole Christian World past and present.

It is I know commonly asked, Where are we commanded to Pray with a Form? To which it were Answer enough to demand, Where are we commanded to Pray without a Form? So that by this Rule we should use no Prayers at all. If then you dare Pray without a Form, tho' you have no express command for so doing, why may you not as lawfully Pray with a Form? Especially when you have the command of your Rulers to oblige you thereto, whom God has commanded you in things lawful to obey. And that surely may be well esteemed lawful, which is no where forbidden, either directly or by any good consequence, not in one place in all the Bible; but more than that, our Saviour, as was before said, gave his Disciples a Form, and commanded them to use it (Luke 11. 2.) which I think shews it to be our Duty still to use that Form, and does also very fairly prove the lawfulness at least of other Forms agreeable thereto.

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As to what is frequently urged, of Praying in, or by the Spirit, so far as that denotes our making use of that Assistance of the Spirit, which is common to Christians in all Ages, this may as well be done with a Form, as without. For else a man could not Pray by the Spirit, whilst he is using the Lord's Prayer. But whilst we Pray for things agreeable to the Will of God revealed in his Word, and do Pray with Humility, Perseverency and Faith in the promises, and in the Exercises of such like Graces of the Spirit, we do this while most certainly Pray by the Spirit, tho' to the use of a Form: But so does not he who is destitute of these Graces, tho' he be never so ready at Praying without Book. Much more might be said to this purpose, but I shall only urge further the practice of those very Persons, who make this Objection. Even you your selves, who speak against Forms in the Worship of God, do your selves frequently use them. I doubt not but you often use the same Expressions in your Prayers, and so do the Ministers with whom you joyn, whose Prayer therefore so far is a Form; yea every Prayer you joyn with, is a Form as to you, and you are as much limited and confined by it, as by a Form. But that which I chiefly intend, is this, that you do commonly use Forms in the Worship of God, I mean whilst you sing David's Psalms which you I am now speaking to, I suppose frequently do. And I would fain know what manner of Reason can be given, why it should not be as lawful to use a Form of Prayer as a Form of Praise, since in both we Worship God? Yea many of these Psalms are indeed Prayers in the stricter sense; and he that uses them with Devotion, doth accordingly Address himself to God in the use of them. And where, I beseech you is the unlawfulness of this? And if it be lawful thus to Praise God and Pray to him with a Form, when put into Verse and Metre, why is it not as lawful to do it out of Verse? If it be said, These Psalms are of Divine Authority, yet certainly it must be granted, that as they are composed into Metre, there is a great deal of Humane Invention, and that none of the best in our common Translation. But if it be enough to justify the use of these Psalms, that they are agreeable to those of Divine Authority,



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thority, tho' not just in the same words; why will not this justify the use of those Prayers, which are as agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, and often use the very same Expressions? Nay, I suppose you would not think it unlawful to sing Pious Hymns composed by able Men, in which there was nothing contrary to Scripture, and for what manner of Reason can you then refuse to joyn in Prayers against which there lies a little exception? But to conclude this, there are few of you I suppose, but upon occasion can joyn in some parts of Common Prayer, at sometimes at the Buxial of your Friends, sometimes at the Solemnizing of Matrimony, your own or others, and why then can you not with a good Conscience joyn in the other parts, particularly in this which is used at the Administering of the Holy Communion. Especially considering that this whole Office is generally looked upon by the Non-conformists, so far as I have read or heard, as little liable to exception, as any other in the whole Book. Nor do I well remember, that ever I heard any Objection against the matter of it.

Obi. (4.) If yet any should Object, That they are dissatisfied with the Ministers use of the Surplice in his Administering of the Lord's Supper.

Ans. (1.) In a few words, I desire such to consider what appearance of a fault it can be for Ministers, as well as other Professions of Men, to use distinct Garments peculiar to their Profession, when they are employed in any parts of the Publick Worship and Service? Whilst they do this merely for Decency sake: for to that end are they appointed in our Church, being only stiled Ornaments, without a word said of any Holiness in them more than in our common Garments, no nor any thing that I know of about their significance.

(2.) If this be granted that they may wear a peculiar Habit, then why not a Surplice as well as any other, the Custom of the Church and the Commands of Authority having introduced it? Where lies the fault of it? in the colour, or the shape, or where? Why is not a White Garment as innocent and as lawful as a Black one? What if Priests under the Law wore Linnen Garments? or what if Popish Priests wear them, what's

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what's that to us? Must we do nothing that they do, in matters of this nature? If they wear Woollen, must we therefore lay it aside? I wonder what Scripture or Reason can be brought for so absurd a fancy.

(3.) But lastly, Suppose there was a fault in the Ministers wearing of the Surplice (for which truly the pretence is very slender) yet what's this to the People who wear it not? Can you think that his fault in this Case will be charged upon you? Yes you will say, You hereby give your Consent and Approbation. And why do you fancy so? It's not required of you as the condition of your Admittance to give your Approbation. Nor does your coming hither it self do it. For we know the contrary, that you do not Approve of it. And if you think it necessary for the discharge of your Consciences, you may go before hand, and tell your Minister as much, if that will satisfy you. It is here much what the same, as in offering your Children to Baptism, after which you know they are to be signed with the sign of the Cross. Your desire is only that they should have Christian Baptism; but as to the Cross, if there be any Sin in it (which I think is beyond the wit of Man to prove) let him bear the Blame who is guilty. You are not concerned therein. Here you may, if you think fit, freely declare your judgment to the Minister, only give him leave after that, to act according to his judgment, and there will be no hurt done.

Object. 5. Some perhaps may say (and it is the last Objection I intend to take notice of) That for themselves they are satisfied with the lawfulness of all that's required, and could be well content to come to the Communion, only they fear they shall give offence to some weaker Brethren, who have not attained this satisfaction, whereas the Scripture forbids the giving offence to such.

Ans. (1.) That Offence or Scandal which the Scripture especially forbids, as is commonly acknowledged, is the doing any thing which may be an hurt to the Souls of our Brethren, any way drawing them into, or confirming them in Sin, or discouraging them from their Duty. And this we are then chiefly warned against, when we may avoid it merely by denying our selves



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Selves in some things that are left to our own choice and liberty. But I see not how this reaches our present case; nor is it usually taken in this Sense by those of the People who make this Objection.

(2.) But in your sense of the word, as it signifies a cross to your Brother. Pray consider well whose pleasure and satisfaction are you most to consult in this Case. I should think you ought first to look at the Peace of your own Conscience. For if you are satisfied with the lawfulness of what is required, how can you with a quiet mind neglect the publick performance of this weighty Duty which our blessed Saviour hath so expressly enjoined, and by which you honour him before the World, and do shew forth his Death till he come? And will you neglect all this in compliance with the weakness and mistakes of any of your Fellow-creatures? Beside this, do you not also disobey and displease both your Magistrates and Ministers, either by a total neglect of this Duty, or by doing it in private, in a way of Separation. And will you chuse to grieve those who are your Brethren, and somewhat more your Superiours, by this your neglect, rather than displease some private persons, who indeed have no just cause of Offence whilst you do but your Duty.

(3.) Again, by this means you do indeed take the direct course to offend your Brethren in the Scripture sense, that is to hurt their Souls; for you do hereby confirm those weak persons in their mistakes, and in the Separation which they off occasion, and by your Example also tempt others to the same course, to slight and neglect the Publick Communion. Wherefore if you are once well satisfied your selves, endeavour the same for your Friends. If you cannot do that, yet enjoy your own freedom, and be not in bondage to other Peoples Errors. Walk according to the Light of your own Mind, and be not misled by their Ignorance. Look not upon it as a trivial matter; consider what a reproach and dishonour you cast upon our Publick Assemblies, whilst by your practice you declare them so corrupt and vile as not to be joined with; passing as it were an heavy Sentence of Excommunication on the whole Congregation, yea, on all others in the Land.

Re-

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*Remember they have no good Character in Holy Writ, who cry to their Brethren Stand off, we are holier than you. What Sentence is past on the Pharisees on this account, the Gospel plainly acquaints us, whilst we there read how our Blessed Saviour shun'd not the Society of those poor Publicans in order to their good, whom the others despised: thereby at once giving us an Example both of Humility and Charity. Do not alledge that you think your selves bound to seek out for a purer Society and purer Administrations, whilst there is nothing sinful required of you as the condition of your Communion in all Ordinances with our Church. And therefore certainly there is no impurity contracted by communicating with it. If this be not enough to satisfy a Mans Conscience, where shall he rest? And though you may fancy that this or that way of Worship, because of some external Modes and Circumstances for which you have a peculiar fondness, is more pure than what was in publick: Yet if upon such accounts as these you break the Peace of the Church, and withdraw from the Publick Assemblies, then surely the way you engage in will be found to be impure, because contrary to the Word of God. For where can you find in all that Word any precept or allowance given, that because of a Form of Prayer, Kneeling at the Communion, &c. you may separate from the Publick Worship, and from those Ministers whom the Providence of God, and a lawful Authority have set over you, and chuse to your selves other Ministers, and with them erect private Assemblies in opposition to the publick? Surely there is no just cause for such a Separation, and consequently this may be justly stiled a Schism, an unlawful Division, and a great Breach of the Churches Peace, which is most strictly forbidden in Holy Scripture, and hath still been look'd on as a very heinous Sin by Holy Men in all Ages; being commonly attended with a world of mischievous Consequences, too many to be here so much as mention'd. That of the Apostle is very comprehensive, where Envy and Strife is (the most natural effects of Schism) there is Confusion and every evil work, Jam. 3. 16. And of this our own Experience in these*



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days, will scarce give us leave to doubt. Wherefore we ought to avoid the very appearance of so great an Error. And yet it may be more restrain us from any inclinations to a Separation, if we consider what is commonly urged by Writers on this Subject, and I think is a very great Truth, that they who separate from the Publick Worship of our Church, from Prayers and Sacraments, on such Accounts as are before mentioned, they must by the same reason separate from all Christian Churches that have been from the Apostles time, down to our days: Yea, and from all the Reformed Churches that are now in the World. For both one and the other, have had either the very same things, or those which are of the same nature, and therefore as liable to exceptions. And should not a sober Man mightily suspect those Principles, which if they be strictly pursued and put in practice, would oblige him thus to separate from the whole Christian Church, that is and has been in all Ages. Yea, I think I may safely add further, that there is not any one Party of what denomination soever of those who separate from us, but they themselves have somewhat amongst them, in their way of Worship, as liable to exception, as those things which they scruple in ours. In several Instances they will all be found to make use of their own prudence in determining some particular Circumstances, which are left undetermined in the Word of God, and for which they can show no express Precept. Why then should they condemn that in others, which they allow in themselves? They have, I am sure, no more command for Praying without a Form, than we for Praying with one (I think not so much) nor for Sitting at the Communion, than we have for Kneeling, with a multitude more Instances that might be given. So that for the same reason any of those call'd Presbyterians separate from us, the Independents may separate from them, the Anabaptists from the Independents, and the Quakers from the Anabaptists, each pretending greater Purity than the other, and quarrelling with what they call Human Inventions. And yet after all, I doubt not but the Quakers themselves, who would seem to strip Religion stark naked, of all that

People

## THE PARABLE

People ignorant of all Popish and Superstitious; yet each  
these have their own Forms and Ceremonies; yea, many  
of them, and that such silly ones, as have nothing of Reason  
no more than Scripture to be alledged for them. And this  
after they have pretended to such a Spiritual Dispensation,  
than they have thrown aside Baptism and the Lord's Sup-  
per, as external carnal things, tho' most expressly command-  
ed by our Blessed Saviour; and so this Errour has been  
they say, whilst they are still for a more thorough Reforma-  
tion, and purer Administrations. All which may well ob-  
lige and persuade us to rest satisfied in our Communion  
with that Church where the Word and Sacraments are so  
purely Administered, that without submitting to any sinful  
Conditions we may partake of them; and this Privilege  
through God's singular Favour, we may enjoy in this our  
Church, if in any other in the whole World. How then can  
we justify a Separation from it? How carefully should we  
avoid the first beginnings of it, whatever has a tendency to  
it? But its time to leave this Argument.

Only before I conclude, tho' I have already exceeded the  
due bounds of a Preface, let me take the freedom, earnestly  
to beseech you who are any way inclined or tempted to this  
Separation, seriously to consider, and impartially to follow the  
things that make most for Peace, for the Peace of Church  
and State, and for the Peace of your own Consciences. In  
order thereto, calmly and soberly weigh the Arguments that  
have here, or any other where, been offered to you. And if  
your Doubts still remain, address your selves to those who  
have the Care over your Souls for fuller Satisfaction, and re-  
ceive their Directions and Advice, without prejudice or par-  
tiality. And withal, yea, about all your other endeavours,  
beg of God, the Father of Lights, the God of Truth and  
Peace, that he would grant you the knowledge of the Truth,  
and direct you by his Holy Spirit into the way of Peace  
and Holiness, which are agreeable to his own most blessed  
Will. And let these Prayers be put up with Minds sincerely  
disposed to do the Will of God, in all things, so far as you  
know it; in singleness and simplicity of Heart, aiming wholly  
at



## THE RHEFACT

as the Glory of God, the Interest of Religion, the Welfare and Happiness of our dear Immortal Souls, and be not, I beseech you, so weakly and imaginatively that God is so much pleased or honoured with this or that Mode and Way of Worship, as he is with Humility and Charity, with a peaceable and quiet Submission to the Lawful Commandments of our Superiors. And in these does the purity and power of Religion much more consist than in any such external Circumstances. By our Contentments about these things, it is most apparent that Religion receives infinite Prejudice, especially considering with what Unchristian Hearts they are commonly managed.

The Zeal which should be laid out upon the weightier matters of Law and Gospel, is too often unprofitably spent upon this Mint, Annise and Cummin. And yet on all sides, Men are too prone to flatter themselves with an Opinion of their being very Devout and Religious, because of their Zeal for or against these things, whilst little of Piety and Holiness appears in their Life and Conversation. As if they had never heard, That the Kingdom of God consists not in Meats and Drinks, but in Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, in the Love of God, and our Brethren, and in humble Obedience to our Rulers, for Gods sake. Whilst we should be provoking one another to Love and to good Works, we rather provoke to Wrath and Hatred, by reviling, censuring and back-biting. And that the true Christian Spirit of Charity, with all the blessed Fruits of it, wherein the very Life and Essence of Religion consists, is almost banish'd out of the World. And little Love to God himself appears amongst us, except our Flaming of one another away with for a sign of it. For all this we are apt to shelter under the honourable name of Zeal for Religion. This is oft made a Cloak, both for wicked Actions, and for unruly Passions. But such a bitter Zeal it is, as St. James describes, Jam. 3. 14, 15, which is accompanied with Scife and Envy, and is Earthly, Sensual and Devilish. Whilst true Zeal is that which proceeds from Piety, is attended with Charity, and managed with Moderation and Prudence. In neither

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*sifts the Magistrate, nor hurts our Brethren, nor disquiets our own Minds, but like the Wisdom from above (where after-ward described) is pure and peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits. Is inclined to love the good, and delight in them; to pity the bad, and do all we can to mend them. These are the Fruits of it. But how rarely are these to be found in the World. Whilst Iniquity abounds, the Love of many waxes cold, but in their Contentions they are ever hot. And all this Strife and Division are we guilty of, whilst we all seem sensible of the danger we are in from a common Enemy. To whom we now expose our selves as a Scorn and Derision by our vilifying and reproaching of one another, and so whom we may become a very easy Prey, by turning every Man his hand against his Brother.*

*If we bite and devour one another, may we not fear to be consumed one of another; whilst our Adversaries behold the pleasant Spectacle, and soon very enjoy the Rich Fruits of our Frowns and Fallias. This we all seem to apprehend, and thus we frequently complain, and yet how little is done by us to prevent our danger, and to remove the cause of these Complaints.*

*If it be said, What can private Persons (far to such an I speaking) do to this purpose? Very much certainly, thro' God's Blessing, might we do. If all of us, in the first place, would enter into the serious consideration of our ways, humble our selves before God, for our own particular sins (instead of censuring and accusing of others) reform and amend our own Lives, and entirely devote our selves to the Service of God and his Son Jesus, in such a course of Piety, Righteousness, Sobriety, and Universal Goodness, as we stand obliged to by our Profession of Christianity, and by our Sacramental Vows both in Baptism, and at the Holy Communion. This is that Reformation toward which every Man may do somewhat; which is far from giving any disturbance to the publick Peace, but indeed it doth mightily conduce to our present Settlement and Security, as well as to our future eternal Happiness. For by this means, Almighty God will be at peace with us, and will afford*



## THE ZEAL OF A COLE

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afford us his Favour and Protection; And if God be for us, what need we fear who is against us? How easily can he turn the hearts of our Enemies, or weaken their hands, and frustrate all their Devices? Yea, by this means we should certainly become more generally inclinable to peace with one another. True Religion renders Men of a mild and peaceable, of a yielding and benign temper. It sweetens their Nature, and subdues their Passions, and mortifies those Lusts, from whence there come Wars and Fightings amongst them; such as Pride and Covetousness, Riot, and Luxury, Wrath and Malice, Cruelty and Revenge: for where these make a Tumult and Disorder in the breasts of Men, they are not like to have Peace with themselves, nor with their Neighbours. And what good would such a peace do, if it could be obtained, whilst we should still be at enmity with God? Nor is there much likelihood that the Enemies of God should be any great Friends to Church or State. Very violent they may be for their carnal Interests, very hot and zealous for a Party or an Opinion, full of Rage and Fury against those that differ from them; but they are never like to be instruments of Peace, whilst they are not Lovers of Holiness; how loudly soever some of them may call for Reformation, and others for Uniformity. And what a nauseous fullsome thing is it, to hear the Atheistical and Profane crying out for a Reformation of this and that in Church and State; whilst they will not be perswaded to reform their own Lives, which a thousand times more concerns them? As if these Men had any true zeal for Religion, whose Lives are a perfect Defiance and Contradiction to it. Nor is it much better, I confess, to hear those Men vehemently urging Conformity to the Laws of the Church, who themselves live in no manner of Conformity to the Laws of Christ, the Head of the Church. As if a Man who is an open Rebel against his Prince, should be angry at another for not obeying an inferior Magistrate. But would we all in the first place agree to be Pious and Holy, there would be much more hope of our Agreement in lesser matters. For Holiness is the centre where we must all unite, if ever an Union to any good purpose be effected.

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affected amongst us. What would it profit us to be all joyn'd to one Church, and to be separate from Christ? To use the same Prayers, and to have the same Devotion? To frequent the same Sacraments, and not perform our Power? Such an external shadow and appearance of Unity, without an inward Principle, will neither be very durable nor useful. But when we become United in the love of God and true Goodness, then are we like to live in Unity and Godly Love. When we are all led and governed by the same Spirit of Truth and Holiness, then are we like to retain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace and in Rapprochement of Life. Then will our little differences either vanish of themselves or be more easily accommodated, or managed with Meekness and Lowliness, with Christian Moderation and mutual Forbearance, such as becomes the Disciples of the Blessed Jesus, who have all one Father, one Lord, one Spirit, one Faith, one Baptism, and live in hope of the same Eternal Glory.

Thus in the first place giving up our selves unto God, as his Faithful and Obedient Servants, next let us see to render unto Cæsar the things that are his; and shew that we Fear God by our Honouring of the Queen as Gods Vice-gerent. Let us then as Subjects of the same Princes, Inhabitants of the same Kingdom, all whose Interests are in the same bottom, let us all render to our Dread Sovereign that Homage and Obedience, that Honour and Reverence, to which we are most deeply engaged by all the Bonds of Reason and Religion, by our Oaths and Vows, by the light of Nature and the express Laws of God in the Old Testament and the New. Let us continually be satisfied with our private Station, keep in our Sphere, have great regard to the publick Peace, study to be quiet, and every Man do his own Business. Let us carefully avoid all uncharitable Surmises and Suspensions, all bold and saucy Censures and reproachful Reflections upon our Rulers and their Proceedings, and do our utmost, to preserve all due Veneration and Honour for the Queen's Person and Government; Obeying Her Laws, affectionately Praying for Her Welfare and Happiness, and for the Peace of our Jerusalem, both of Church and State, joining also our endeavours to our Prayers, that under Her we may lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty.

To this end, Lastly, let us all, as Members of the same Church, who profess the same Holy Christian Religion (and that as Reformed from the Innovations and Corruptions of Popery) laying aside all sinful Animosities and Prejudices, and (to the utmost of our power) all our groundless Doubts and Scruples; let us, I say, humbly and affectionately joyn together in the solemn Publick Worship and Service of God. Let us here receive the Sincere Milk of the Word, whether Read or Preached, that we may grow thereby. Let us here joyn in the same common Supplications and Prayers, which are made to God alone in the Name

of



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of Christ, for things agreeable to his Will, wherein we are all concerned and to which therefore, we may all most readily say Amen. Would we thus with one Mind and one Mouth glorify God whom we call Our Father; this surely would still put us in mind that we are Brethren, and engage us to live in Brotherly Love and Kindness. All Society and Intercourse with each other, tho' it be in matters of Trade and common Converse, does naturally tend to breed Friendship and Goodwill; how much more will Society and Conjunction in the Duties of Religion and Holy Worship have that good Effect? But more especially, what a significance and keep up mutual Friendship and Kindness in common Communion by their Eating and Drinking together. And therefore above all, let us see duty to prepare our selves, and come together with great friendship and unanimity to this Holy Feast, the Supper of our Lord, which he hath graciously prepared for the Entertainment of his Polluted. To this Feast of Charity, let us come hither to express and increase our Charity to one another, as well as our Love and Thankfulness to our God and Saviour; this being one great end of its appointment, and which we are plainly taught by all that we here do, by what we say and what we remember (as is more fully shewn in the Book it self). Here we are entertained at the same Table as Children of the same Family, and as we partake of the same Bread, so are we to become one Body and one Bread. Whilst we Drink of the same Cup, we are to Drink into one Spirit, by which Spirit we were Baptized into one Body, as the Apostle speaks, 1 Cor. 12. 13. But especially whilst we seriously consider what it is that we here commemorate, even an instance of the greatest Charity that ever was shewn to the World; surely this or nothing will fill us with Bowels of Love and Charity to our Brethren. Behold we have here the Son of God set before us Bleeding and Dying for vile Sinners, even for us that were Rebels and Enemies, that he might make us the Friends of the most High God, and save us from the Wrath to come. Let us hear him on the Cross Praying for his Murderers, Father forgive them, they know not what they do. Yea, see him there shedding his precious Blood for these wretched Men, whose Hands were imbrued in it. And shall not this great Example have a mighty Effect upon us? Have we received such kindness from our Master, and shall we not shew all we can to our Fellow-Servants? Seeing also what we shew each other for his sake, he takes as done to himself. His Spirit is grieved, and his Wounds even Bleed afresh, by the Divisions of his Members amongst themselves, and by their harshness and uncharitableness one toward another: Shall we thus requite the Lord for his loving Kindness? God forbid. Shall not that most Precious Blood, which was shed to reconcile God and Man, reconcile us all one to another? Did Christ so love us all as to Die to make us Happy, and shall we hate one another, and delight in each

## The P R E F A C E.

each others Misery? Was this Blood of so much value with God, as to appease his Wrath, and render him willing to be at peace with us, and shall it not soften all our Hearts, allay all our Passions, extinguish our unnatural Heats, and enflame us with a warm and vigorous Love to our God and Saviour, and to all Mankind, especially to our Christian Brethren? Yea, shall not the Death of Christ have this effect upon us, when we remember that he Dyed not only as an Atonement but as an Example, which we are all bound to imitate, that as he laid down his Life for us, so we should be ready to do the same for our Brethren? Especially when he hath also told us, that Faith working by Love, is the great condition of our sharing in the benefits of his Death; that we shall never be forgiven except we forgive, nor shall we own'd as his Disciples, except we love one another. Let us remember that Christ our Passover is Sacrificed for us, and let us keep this Feast not with the leavened Bread of Malice, but with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth; even with sincere and fervent love to God and Man. But it's time to conclude. That the Death of Christ may be frequently and seriously remembered in this holy manner, and to these blessed ends at the Communion, is the design of this Book. And that all good Christians may with full satisfaction of Mind frequent the Communion in our Publick Assemblies, is the design of this Preface. And that solid Piety and universal Charity, with Unity and Concord both in Religious Offices and in our whole Conversation, may be every where effectually promoted, is the earnest desire of the Author, and shall by God's Grace be the business of his life. Let the Reader heartily say that it shall be his also. And to all our honest Endeavours in our several places for the promoting of Peace and Holiness, may Almighty God give his Blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

## E R R A T A.

**P**age 284. line 11. for and bestowed upon the Lord Jesus, read  
and bestowed upon us by the Lord Jesus.

**T H B**



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## C H A P. I.

*The Introduction, lamenting the ignorant Vulgar's Contempt of their Salvation, and shewing the design of this Treatise.*

**T**HE blessed God, who in these last days hath spoken to us by his Son, and more fully and clearly revealed the way to Life and Immortality, which Christ hath brought to light, hath abundantly manifested his Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, in suiting and accommodating his Commands and Institutions, to the meanness of our Capacities; and, as a God who knows our frame, hath so fitted himself and the Revelations of his Will, with a respect to our weakness, that nothing but affected Ignorance, and meer Willfulness, can keep out the understanding of what he hath taught us, or hinder the performing of what he commands us.

The Doctrines of the Gospel, which are of necessity to be believed in order to Salvation, and upon which an Holy Life is built, are few and plain, which we may find sum'd up in our Creed. As for the Precepts which are given to be the Rule of our Life, how easie are they to be known and remembred, how exceeding reasonable in themselves, and most agreeable to our rectified Natures, and apparently tending to the unspeakable Advantage of particular Persons, Families, Towns, and Common-wealths; the Gospel being designed, not only to bring Men to Glory and Pleasure hereafter, but to better the World at present, and to make this Earth a kind of Type and Shadow of Heaven; and so it would be, if Men were but more generally brought under the Power and Influence of the Christian Religion,

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which



which doth not only forbid those Sins which are destructive to the Happiness of Societies and single Persons, as the Laws and Religion of the Heathens might also do, but strikes at the very heart of Wickedness, and gives the surest Directions, and best Helps, for the utter removal of the cause and root of all Disorders in the World, which it would be beside my purpose at present to speak of. None have cause now to complain, that they know not what to do to obtain Eternal Life, since he that runs may read his Duty; to love God above all, and our Neighbour as our selves, to do as we would be done unto, to repent of all our Sins, and betake our selves to the Mercies of God, through his Son Christ Jesus, for a Pardon; to be humble, holy, chaste and temperate; is any of this difficult to be understood? Have we not a plain word, directing us how to lead the whole course of our life? And have we not a Monitor within us, the Spirit of God by our Consciences, in most cases, telling us how we should behave our selves? The sum of all is comprehended in our Baptismal Covenant, *to renounce the Devil and all his Works, the World, with its Pomp and Vanities, the Flesh, and the Lusts thereof, and to be devoted to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.* And as our Duty is easie to be known, so it is not difficult to be done, where there is first a willing mind; for indeed in this is comprehended all, to be unfeignedly willing to be such as God would have us, and to do all that he bids us. So that none can excuse himself for his Disobedience, which is nothing else but Obstinacy or gross Negligence. And though of our selves we are poor weak Creatures, yet through the Almighty Grace that is offered to our assistance, we may be enabled to do all things needful for our Happiness; and those weaknesses that cleave to us, which we allow not our selves in, but strive against and bewail, we are assured, through the Merits of our precious Saviour, shall never be laid to our charge.

And as the great Truths and Duties of our Religion are thus plain and easie, so the positive Institutions, whereby

whereby I mean the Sacraments of Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, are few and clear; being neither burthen-some to be practiced, nor the meaning of them hard to be understood; doth not that Form of Words, which Christ hath enjoined to be used in Baptism, whereby we are solemnly received into the number of professed Christians, sufficiently shew the meaning of it? Namely, that we are hereby consecrated and given up to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. And doth not our being Baptiz'd with Water, very plainly hold forth our washing and cleansing from the Stains and Pollutions of defiled Nature, and from the Guilt of Sin, by the Blood and Spirit of Christ? And who knows not, that the Lord's Supper is for remembrance of Jesus Christ that died for us? The breaking of the Bread, and pouring forth of the Wine, how fitly and evidently do they represent to us, that his Body was broken, and his Blood shed for us? And the Elements of Bread and Wine, which we commonly use to nourish and refresh us, do naturally signifie that Strength and Comfort which we receive from Christ, as I shall hereafter shew at large.

Since then the Truths of our Religion are so evident, the Duties so reasonable and excellent, the Sacraments so easie, so few, and so exceeding profitable, may it not well be expected, that all who profess themselves owners of that Religion which Jesus Christ hath taught and establish'd, should be well acquainted with these weighty Truths, diligent in the practice of their Duty to their Maker and Saviour, and to one another, and most devout and serious in the observation and use of these Holy Sacraments, and constant in their attendance upon all Ordinances, as Publick Prayer and Preaching, whereby they may be instructed and enabled to know and do the Will of him that sent them into the World. But alas, alas, to the dishonour of God and our Profession, and to the grief of all that long after the advancement of true Goodness in the World, by sad experience we find the quite contrary even in this our Nation, that we look no



further. God forbid that I should go about to disparage the glorious Fruits of our Reformation from Popish Ignorance and Superstition; no, blessed and for ever praised be our God, for that unspeakable Mercy to this unworthy Land; for the happy effects whereof, doubtless, thousands of Souls are praising him in Glory, and thousands more yet on Earth, have cause to be infinitely thankful for that clear Light which visited this corner of the Earth, when sunk into little less than an *Egyptian* Darknes; so that I verily believe there is no Nation under the Sun, where there are greater numbers of knowing hearty Christians, who walk agreeable to the Gospel-rule, such that would be owned and approved by Christ himself and his Apostles, were they now amongst us, and will be at the day of their appearance before him. But having said this to prevent exception and mistake, give me leave to resume my Complaint, that still there are so many that are in Darknes in the midst of Light, and that walk *as in Darknes, not as Children of the Light*. Notwithstanding the Means of Knowledge, multitudes remain in gross Ignorance, and are unacquainted even with the great Foundation-Truths of the Gospel; and can it then be otherwise, but that they should be vicious, careless, and worldly? And many who have a superficial knowledge of their Duty, and confess it's best to be careful in doing of it, yet are themselves wilful and gross neglecters of it, and live in open violation of God's holy Laws. Many there are that can talk religiously, and are ready in the Scriptures, that yet will not by any means be brought to forsake those Sins, which they find God's Word every where condemns, nor will they set themselves to live such an holy serious Life, which is again and again so expressly and earnestly urged upon them. As for the Sacraments, though most are careful to bring their Children to be Baptized, yet I pray God it be not more out of Custom than Conscience; for some of these can give no rollerable account of the Reason of that Ordinance, nor why they would have their Children partake

take of it; only as they see their Neighbours do, so do they. But yet there are far fewer, who make any Conscience of informing their Children what a strict Covenant they are entred into, how they are related and solemnly engaged to God; for alas, can we expect Parents should teach their Children to walk as becomes those that are in Covenant with God, when they themselves live rather like Rebels to his Majesty, than faithful Subjects?

As for the Lord's Supper (which I intend to make the Subject of my following Discourse) how sadly is it neglected in many places; or else rusht upon inconsiderately and carelessly, as if it was but a matter of course, and no such dangerous thing to receive it unworthily, as Scripture assures us that it is. How many Hundreds, yea, Thousands, are there in both City and Country, who make no Conscience at all of coming to the Table of the Lord? Perhaps they may come once a Year, and scarce that. Nay, many go from one Year to another, and never appear there; as if they acknowledg'd not they had a Saviour Died for them; or as if he had not bid them thus to remember his Death; or as if his Death were not worth the remembring. O careless, stupid Sinners! what have you got to take up your thoughts and minds, that Christ himself is thus forgotten by you? You can think well enough of your Children and Friends, yea, of your Cows and Sheep, and your very Swine, and must Christ have no room in your thoughts or memory? Do these indeed deserve more Love than he? Have they done more for you than he hath done? Or can they do more than he is able farther to do, and willing also, if your wretched Obstinacy did not prevent him? I know you can say, many of you, that he deserves not to live, who can forget Christ; and that you do indeed remember him, and take him for your only Saviour; and will pretend that you have God always in your mind, when you are about your work, or upon the way, and you think we must take your word for't, because we know not your Hearts, and cannot disprove you; but if one may judge



by your carriage, you manifest nothing less. If one follow you from morning till night, he will scarce hear one serious word come out of your Mouths ; you spend not half an hour in a day in Prayer, either with your Families, or alone ; plain enough we can hear you Swear and Curse, and take God's Holy Name in vain, but scarce ever so much as once to mention him with Reverence. Whatever Company you light into, you are still talking foolishly and vainly, or else only of your Worldly Affairs, but nothing that concerns the Service of God, and the Salvation of your Souls. But for many of you, I need no other evidence against you, than your gross Neglect of this Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. If this Paper fall into the hands of any such, (and I hope God will direct it into their Hands, for it was for such that I did chiefly intend it.) If I say, thou who art reading these Lines, be guilty of neglecting this Ordinance of Christ from one Year to another, when thou hast frequent Opportunities and Invitations to partake of it, let me ask thee how thou hast the Face to say, thou remembrest Jesus Christ, when thou wilt not do such a small thing as he enjoins thee to do in remembrance of him ? Never taking care to prepare thy self, and come to his Holy Table. Canst thou remember him, and yet forget his Command ? And absent thy self from those who meet together to Celebrate his remembrance, at an Ordinance appointed by Christ himself for that very purpose ? Ah Poor Creatures, that you did but well know your selves, and your own necessities, and concernments, then could you never be so unmindful of Jesus Christ ; you would as soon forget your daily Bread. Oh ! Did you well know what he hath done for you, and under what engagements you stand to him, you would sooner forget your dearest Friend, who had saved you from Death, and daily fed you, and clothed you, and kept you alive ; for indeed this, and much more than this, do you owe to the Redeemer of Mankind. O ! that you would but believe and consider, what glorious unspeakable Treasures of Love and Goodness he hath pur-

purchased for, and will bestow upon you, if you will accept them upon his terms, and then you would no more forget him, then you would forget your Prince or Landlord, from whose Bounty you were in daily expectation of a plentiful Estate. And if you would but see to get your selves well informed of the Nature of this Holy Ordinance, distinctly and clearly to apprehend the reason and use of it, and what Priviledges and Blessings are contained in, represented and sealed by it ; I dare say you would more long to partake of it, than of the most delicious Banquet, or sumptuous Feast that ever was prepared. But what do I talk of ? Who can perswade carnal, sensual, stupid Creatures, to believe that there is any substance, any worth in those things that their Senses cannot reach to ? What care they for that which no way tends to the pampering and pleasing of the Flesh ? Give me leave, before I come to what I principally design, a little to lay open the wretched carelessness of the generality of Men, and briefly hint at the cause ; that they may be ashamed of themselves when they see their Pictures and Description, and so may seek out for the Cure of their Distempers.

Who would not, by the Lives of most, conjecture that they thought themselves sent into the World on purpose to get Food and Raiment, and to make provision for the Flesh ; and that they had Reason given them for nothing else, but to be more witty and politick in carrying on their Worldly Designs ? And how well would it be for them at the last, if those Souls should have the greatest Reward, which were most loving to the Body, most solicitous for its welfare, and did toil most in its Service : But what an heavy doom will light on them, if they must hereafter fare (as for certain they must) according as they imployed themselves in seeking their own proper Happiness, in the pleasing and serving of the great God ? Oh the strange folly and brutishness of these Men, who are so forward of themselves, to seek out after any thing which they believe makes for their temporal Good, and



yet will not by any means be drawn or driven to that, which is indeed for their spiritual and eternal Good, yea and their temporal too, so far as may consist with these. As if when they are contriving and working for the Body, then only they were about their own business; but when they are minding the matters of their Souls, they were imploy'd for some body else, in works that will be of no use or advantage to them; when yet God himself hath told us, that in the matters of Religion, *If we are wise, we are wise for our selves.* But this comes to pass by reason of that sottishness which inclines poor Creatures to judge of all things by their Sense, and to measure their Goodness by their suitableness to the Flesh. This makes the whole Gospel to be a meer riddle to them, and little more regarded than a strange story; for it treats of spiritual invisible things, wherein immortal Souls are concerned, and they forget that they have such Souls. To hear of spiritual food and raiment, *to put on Christ, and to feed upon him,* all which we meet with in the Word, are Mysteries, of which they are willing to be ignorant. To be *made glad with the light of God's Countenance, to have fellowship with the Father and the Son, to be beautified, adorned and enriched with Graces and good Works,* and the like Expressions, are so dark and knotty, that they know not what to make of them: They account nothing Beauty but what they can look on; not Bravery, which makes not a noise and shew in the World: They know no Raiment they need, but what they wear on their back, nor any Food but that which they put into their bellies. That only do they account Pleasure which they feel in their throats, or which is so gross, that Horses and Dogs have a share in it as well as they; and nothing must pass for Honour with them but having Respect in the World; and that they count their chiefest Riches which they put in their Purles, and lay up in their Bags. And this same Blindness and Carnality, amongst all other Mischiefs that it does, occasions the Contempt of that sacred Appointment of Christ, the Commemoration of his Death, by

par.

partaking of his Supper : For here's nothing provided to give that Entertainment to greedy raging Sensualists which they covet and hunt after. It is indeed very well worthy our observation, that so far as our Senses might be helpful to us in the Service of God, he hath graciously condescended to use such Means as might work upon and affect them, that thereby Faith it self, our apprehension of those things which we see not, may be quickned and advanced ; which, as in some other Instances, so in this Sacrament especially is made manifest. For here we have Christ Crucified plainly held forth to us, and the Benefits we receive by him, are signified by those material things, Bread and Wine, which we eat and drink. And thus far God hath made provision for Sense it self, the more to excite and stir up our dull Spirits ; but so far as the pleasing and humouring the Senses might be an hinderance to the Soul, God hath made no provision for them. Here's no such pomp and gaudiness, and outward splendour, as may gratifie wanton carnal Minds. Papists may devise such things (instead of Christ's Institutions, which they steal away from the People) to the quenching of all true Zeal and spiritual Affection in God's Service ; but the Gospel warrants not any such hurtful devices, and our Church doth justly reject them. Nor is here a Feast of Dainties to satisfy a luxurious Appetite, or feed an hungry Belly. Here's Food for the Soul indeed represented and convey'd by these Elements to the worthy Receiver ; but the most are so ignorant of their greatest Concernments, that they never yet found such a thing within them as a Spiritual Hunger. What, A Soul be hungry ? How can that be ? Alas, they have so much to do to supply the necessities of their Bodies, that they can't have while to regard their Souls. No, they may sink or swim, starve, and damn for them ; for they have other matters to mind which they hold more necessary. It is not a wonder what we read, *Matth. 22.* at the beginning, that when the King had made a Marriage for his Son, and prepared a Feast, and sent forth his Servants to invite the

Guests,



Guests, they should *make light of it*, and begin to frame Excuses, that they had other businels to do, and this and that way to go, and therefore could not come? What, not come to a Feast, to a sumptuous Marriage-Feast? To a Feast made for the King's Son? And when Servants were sent on purpose to invite them to it? Were not these strange sort of stubborn foolish Men, that would disobey their own King, sending them such a courteous Message as this? Reader, dost thou not condemn them in thy own thoughts? Dost thou not think thou would'st never have been so silly and obstinate as they, if thou hadst been so sent unto? But for all thy Thoughts, its well if thou prove not guilty of the very same Fault thy self. For what was the matter think'st thou, that these People would not come when they were invited. Why alas, there was no such Fare made ready as they had a mind to. Be sure had there been but such good Chear as would have fill'd their Bellies, they would have made haste enough, and would have invented Excuses how to get in, rather than to stay away.

But this is a Parable, shewing what Entertainment the most do give to the Gospel, whereby we are invited not only to a Wedding-Feast, to be even Married our selves to the Lord Jesus Christ, the everlasting Son of the Father: And yet this Message, the matchless Mercy whereof may astonish Men and Angels, I say this Message is slighted: *Men will not come to Christ that they may have Life.* Adulterous Souls go after other Lovers, and will not be espoused to the Lord of Glory: *They see no form nor comeliness in him why they should desire him.* They hear great Commendations of him indeed, what an excellent glorious Person he is, no less than the Son of God made Man, whose Love was so great to Mankind, that he laid down his Life for them; but in the mean time, *What has he?* What's to be got by him? What Estates will he settle on them? What Honours will he advance them to? What? Why they shall through him have their Sins pardoned and subdued, their Hearts sanctified, and at length shall

shall be receiv'd into Everlasting Glory. — Nay, if this be all, they have no mind to come on, but when their Consent is desired, they have some Excuse or other ready at hand ; and either they will not come at all, or else not yet, or not so thorowly and heartily as they are commanded ; and in such a wilful Refusal of Grace do thousands persist and perish. And though I suppose this fore-mentioned Parable doth not directly and primarily belong to the Lord's Supper, yet it may by consequence be very well applyed thereto : Since here is a Marriage-Feast of the King's Son, here are the great Blessings and Mercies of the Gospel held forth and offered, and all who come duly prepar'd, and sincerely dispos'd to accept the same, shall be assur'd of them ; and hither do God's Ministers exhort all to come in the appointed regular way. And what's the effect of their Message ? *Why the most make light of it.* Hither to this Holy Table are People call'd to give up themselves to God, to testify the truth of their sorrow for Sin, and to renew their resolutions against it, and so to receive a sealed Pardon, and a Title to Life Everlasting ; but for their parts they have no such liking to these spiritual-good things which are so freely tendered them. The truth is, their Sins as yet they are loath to leave ; for they see no great hurt in them ; nay, they think they find much good at present, and do not use to trouble themselves much with the thoughts of that Mischief they may hereafter do them, and therefore they have no such high Thoughts of Christ for his being able to mortifie and remove their Lusts, and so to save them from the Misery these would bring them to. They can very hardly be perswaded, that there is any such excellency in an Holy Life, that they should so speedily and solemnly resolve upon it. And though they can like well enough to go to Heaven when they must needs leave this World, yet they look upon that day so far off, that they are in no great haste of making sure their Future Happiness, but think it may be time enough to do that a great while hence. And can any Man wonder, if those

who



who are no more sensible of any Benefit they have by Christ, are very slack and negligent in a thankful remembrance of his Death, and of those Benefits which thereby we enjoy and hope for, which is the great end of celebrating this Sacrament? No marvel if such as these always find one Excuse or other, to keep away from that which they have no more love to, and the necessity and advantage whereof, they are no more acquainted with. If there was but any matter of Gain to be got by it, any thing which made for the Flesh, we should need no such ado to get them thither. We may be sure, if the King should but proclaim that he would give Six Pence a-piece to all the Poor throughout *London*, that would repair to *Whitehall*, there would need nothing but the knowledge of it to get them together. O what running, and crowding, and craving would there be! He need not send any Messengers to beseech and perswade them to receive his Charity. But when the Sovereign Majesty of Heaven and Earth by his Heralds proclaims to all, *Ho every one that is willing, let him prepare himself, and come hither and receive an earnest of infinite and everlasting Treasures*, there are few will accept the Offer, as if it was of no value; and as if the Apostle was mistaken, when he prefers the *Blood of Christ* before such corruptible things as *Silver and Gold*. Nay, I'll warrant you, in those Parishes where you shall find so few at a Communion, did but any rich Man amongst them make a Feast, and invite the whole Town to it, you shall find but few stay at home. But now when God himself calls them to his Table, and there hath provided them Food which came from Heaven, true Spiritual Manna, even the Body and Blood of Christ, which is Meat and Drink indeed, they find no great Appetite to this Banquet. All the great words they hear of it work not with them: For in all such cases 'tis not other Mens Words and Opinions that we judge by, but our own relish and feeling. And whilst Men have got such corrupt Dispositions, and carnal Affections, that they savour only those things which are gross and earthly like themselves,

what

what wonder is it if they undervalue that which is so unsuitable to them, and in which they can feel no more taste than in the White of an Egg. A Swine prefers his own swill before the greatest Dainties that can be provided ; and a voluptuous Sinner that is wallowing in the mud of Fleshly Pleasures, would not willingly exchange Conditions with the Glorious Angels, that always behold the Face of God.

Oh whither is the Soul of Man degenerated ! into what a low and sad estate is it fallen, that it finds sweetness in any thing rather than in that which is truly pleasant ? How cheerfully and contentedly can People set themselves to any thing rather than to that only work which God hath appointed them, even the *working out of their Salvation* ? From Morning to Night they can follow their Worldly Business without complaining, and yet know not how to spend one day in seven, nor one half hour in a day in the Service of God, for the saving of their own Souls. Oh what pains do many poor Men take, only to get a Livelihood in the World, and yet think Everlasting Life worth no regard or care at all : They can be content to spend their Thoughts, and Strength, and Time upon Vanity, *to lay out their money for that which is not Bread*, and to labour for the Wind ; but when God saith, *Give me your Hearts*, he is denied. If this careless Generation had but Houses, and Lands, Money and Goods, proffered them on the same Terms that Heaven is, how greedily would they lay hold on them ? If a rich Man should say to them, *Love but this Gold more than the Dirt under your Feet, and you shall have it* ; O how quickly would they purchase it, and never think the Condition hard ! If the poor Man was enjoined to prefer Bread before a Stone, and to desire it more, and then it should be given him, do you think he would ever be without it ? And yet when the Blessed God offers them ten thousand times greater Mercies upon such Terms as these, they refuse them, as if they were required to do some great thing, for that which was not worth their labour. What doth God command



command us, but to love himself more than empty Creatures? To value an everlasting Kingdom before the frail Comforts of this short Life? and yet we will not do it. He bids us but love our best part, even our Souls, more than these vile Bodies; and to take most care for that which deserves most, as being the more excellent. When he enjoins us to fly from Sin, and embrace Holiness; it is as if he would say, *Beware of that which will do you the greatest mischief, and close with that which will do you the most good; Accept of Liberty and Freedom, and do not lye in Prison and Fetters: Be in Health, and not in Sickness;* and yet Men will not be perswaded. When God saith, *prefer my pleasant Service before the Bondage of the Devil, and thou shalt be happy for ever;* he doth as it were say, *Be but heartily willing to accept of Happiness here, and thou shalt have it hereafter;* but the most are unwilling. And upon this it is that not only God, but all the World, yea, themselves, will for ever lay the blame of their Destruction, by their *resolvedness and wilfulness in the ways of Sin, they are merciless murderers of their own Souls.* The Devil may tempt, and the World may allure, but they cannot force them to sin. There is not one of all those Millions that perish, who can truly say, that he was unfeignedly willing to have sav'd himself, but could not. But as for those that perish from among Christians, they have least of all to plead in their own Excuse. For they have been exhorted, and besought again and again, to put away their evil doings, to renounce their Lusts, and turn to the good ways of God, and yet they would not hearken. What though the Devil entic'd them to Wickedness, did not God's Spirit also move upon their Hearts, to have drawn them to Holiness? But they who knew not how to *resist the Devil* as they were commanded, could *resist and grieve, and offer despight to the Spirit of Grace.* Whilst they knew not how to reject nor get away from a sinful Companion, they could put off their Ministers and godly Friends with flat Denials, if not with Contempt and Jeers. What though the Flesh was craving  
for

for forbidden Fruit, unlawful Pleasures and Satisfaction? Yet did not Conscience contradict and check it? Why then should Flesh, which had no reason for its desires, be hearkened to and obeyed, whilst Conscience, which is the Voice of God, must be slighted and silenced? Tell me, whoever thou art, that makest a Trade of Sin, and livest in the Neglect of thy Duty to God that made thee, and keeps thee alive, not accounting it the business of thy Life to serve and honour him, but goes from one day to another without the serious Thoughts of his glorious Majesty, and all his wonderful Works and Mercies; thou who seest no need of hearing or reading God's Word, of constant Prayer, or receiving Sacraments, that puttest off the Thoughts of Death and Judgment, and art careless of making preparations for the same: Tell me I beseech thee, what's the reason of such a wretched sinful course as this? Is it because thou knowest no better? Wast thou never told how thou oughtest to behave thyself? Didst thou never hear who it is puts Men upon Sin, and what Wages they have for it at length? Didst thou never read nor hear of a Saviour that came to call Men to Repentance and Holiness, and laid down his Life to save all that will be his faithful Followers and Servants? It's very strange indeed, if thou hast lived in any such dark corner, that thou wert never acquainted with these matters; but it is most likely thou hast heard them again and again, but all hath been to no purpose. What dost thou not know who made thee? and why thou wast made? There's few Children but can answer such Questions as these, and yet how few Men that consider them, or that live as if they knew them!

There are indeed many to be found, especially of the meaner sort, who tell you they cannot read, nor are Book-learned, and therefore they hope God will hold them excused, and not require much of them, but yet these People have learned enough to look to their Business in the World; and if they be sick, they'll seek for help, or if they are wronged, they'll look out for relief. And what



what have they not Learning enough to know what they  
 must do to be saved? Have they been idle and unwilling  
 to learn so much as to read English; and do they think  
 this will serve their turn to plead for their Ignorance and  
 Neglect of Duty, and wilful Rebellions against God? What  
 were they taught or commanded such difficult things,  
 that none but Scholars can understand or do them? They can  
 tell, as simple as they are, that the Light of the Sun is greater  
 than the Light of a Candle; that Gold is better than Brass;  
 that a King is above a Constable; that its better to have  
 an Estate of their own, which they shall enjoy as long as  
 they live, than to be Tenants to another, to be turned out  
 when he will. Do they know these things, as is it any harder  
 to know that God who made all things, and put that Goodness  
 into them which they have, is better than all those things  
 which he made, and therefore should be preferred before  
 all Creatures? That he who is Lord of All, should be  
 obeyed above All; that to be like him, is better than to  
 be like the Beasts; that a certain everlasting Glory is  
 more worth than short uncertain Comforts here below? Again,  
 these Men knew well enough how to eat and drink, and to  
 take heed of what might hurt their Bodies; they could avoid  
 the Persons and Places that were infected; if the House was  
 on fire they would run out of it, and call Neighbours to help  
 to quench it; if they are upon the way, and are told of  
 Quick-sands and Quagmires, they can avoid them: And yet  
 have they not Learning enough to do good to their Souls, and  
 to take heed of that which will destroy them for ever, and  
 hearken to others that warn them of their danger? They can  
 be diligent enough to please those that do them good turns,  
 and to beware of offending such as can undo them. And yet  
 do they account it such an hard matter to love and please  
 that God who hath given them all the Mercies they ever  
 enjoyed, and to take heed of provoking him to anger, *who can kill both Body and Soul, and cast them into Hell?* Yea, further, let those very People that cannot  
 read,

read, have a Paper given them, that tells them how to cure any Disease they are troubled with, they can go to a Neighbour, and get him to read it to them, and they can mark it so diligently as to follow its Directions. Or if they be in any Trouble about their Estates, they can carry their Deeds and Evidences to a Lawyer, and pray him to peruse them, and tell them how the case stands with them. And what could they get no body to read the Bible, or some good Book to them, that might direct them in the way to Salvation? Or could they not have hearken'd carefully to their Minister, whilst he was telling them what they must do? Or might they not have gone to him in private, and desired particular Instructions for their Souls? Nay, there are few Families of the poorest, but one or other amongst them can read; and might they not have taken some spare time, and have read together, and discoursed one with another about the state of their Souls, and what was to be done in order to Everlasting Happiness? The plain truth is, there are few but can shew Diligence and Skill enough in any Worldly Trifle, that they think does at all concern them; but (as I hinted before) they are so insensible of any Advantage that's to be got by minding the things of Religion, that they disregard them as matters of no worth or consequence. For I cannot imagine whence this strange and damnable Carelessness should come, but that first of all, Men forget that they have Souls which will never dye, but must live for ever in another World, either in Joy or Torment, according as they behaved themselves in this: For certainly, the sound Belief, and frequent sober Consideration of the true Nature of the Soul, is the great Foundation and Support of Seriousness in Religion, the great Design whereof is to help this Immortal Soul to an Happiness suited to its Nature. Wherefore, if the Soul itself be forgotten, how can it otherwise be but God will be forgotten also, and the Duty we owe to him neglected? For though if we were ingenuous, his Mercies to our Bodies might engage us to love and serve him;  
 and



and the most carnal Men may so far remember God, as to look for Health and Wealth, and outward Comforts from him; yet this cannot bring them to any heartiness in Religion, which consists very much in denying the Flesh, and thinking meanly of all things here below; and therefore no Man can serve God as he ought, but he who believes that he rewards his diligent Servants with an everlasting Happiness in the fruition of himself: for nothing but the hopes of this can bear out Men in those difficulties of Suffering and Obedience which they may be call'd to. But if Men have no regard to their Souls, neither will they take any heed to please God, nor make it their business to get to Heaven hereafter, which is nothing else but a State of Happiness principally prepared for a reasonable Soul in the full Enjoyment of God; neither will they take care to prevent their falling into Hell, which is that State of Misery whereinto *they that forget God are turned*, and chiefly appointed for the Punishment of the Soul. And hence it will unavoidably follow, that they will undervalue the Work of Redemption, and disregard the Lord Jesus, who wrought this Work in behalf of the Sons of Men, to recover their Souls to God, to purchase the Pardon of Sin, and enable them sincerely to please God, so to prevent their Damnation, and bring them to Eternal Glory. And if they have no esteem for Christ, then needs must they slight the Word and Sacraments whereby they should be brought to acquaintance with him, to be interested in, and related to him, and to receive the Communications of Grace from him.

Now tho' there are few that will acknowledge themselves guilty of such Ignorance of themselves, such Contempt of God and Glory, and of Christ the way thereto, yet their Actions do too plainly shew it. For certainly if they had any true knowledge of their own Souls, they could not but take more pains to save them than they do, even out of love to themselves; when as now they never in all their lives, many of them, are so much as once brought seriously to ask the Question, *how they should*

*should do to be saved?* No, nor ever withdrew themselves into private for an hours time on set purpose to consider what their Spiritual Condition is, and how they stand related to God, whether as Friends or Enemies, and whither they must go when they depart out of this Life. And tell me then, do these People indeed remember to any purpose that they have Souls that must either be saved or damned for ever? What though they may sometimes hear Sermons, or read the Bible, yet do they use when they come home, or when they have laid aside their Books, soberly to think of what they have read or heard? Do they consider how it concerns them? Do they examine themselves by the Word, and apply it home to their own Consciences, and guide their Lives by it? Do they regard it as that by which they must shortly be judged? And tho' they may sometimes put up a Prayer to God, yet do they perform this Duty as seeing any need of it, taking any delight in it, or as expecting any good from it? Do they before-hand think what they stand in need of, and so pray to God for a supply of their wants, not only of their Bodies, but Souls, in as good earnest as they can ask their Neighbour for any thing they lack. And in the very act of praying have they any awe or sense of God upon their Spirits, as they would have, if they were putting up a Petition to a Prince or Judge? And do they mind what they have been about when they come from the Duty? Do they carefully wait for an Answer of their Prayers, and patiently expect those Blessings which they desired from God, such as Strength against Sin, and Grace to serve him? And do they do what is in their power to procure what they pray for? Thus you may be sure it would be with them, if they were in good earnest in their Prayers. For when they go to any great Man to request a Favour from him, they attend what Answer he makes, and their Thoughts are much upon it, and they are deeply concerned for the success of their request. Tho' they have been Baptized into the Name of Christ, yet do they ever use to think



what they are thereby engaged to, and see to answer that Engagement? And suppose they do sometimes come to the Communion, yet did they ever come to it with such a kind of Spiritual Appetite and expectation of Strength and Benefit, as they go to an ordinary Meal? Or are they careful before hand to fit themselves for the Duty so as to profit by it? Whatever they may pretend, it is most manifest that Religion is not taken by them, for the great work of their Lives. They are far from spending their time, and busying their minds like Men that were sent into the World on purpose to serve God, which they can say is the reason why God made them. It is not their chief study and work so to know and please their Maker, and to get their Peace made with him through the Lord Jesus, that they may live with him hereafter in Glory for ever. No, no, to the Consciences of these Men I dare appeal, this is the least matter of a thousand with them, and there's scarce any thing which they less regard. They hear their Minister about these things, as if he was telling them a Story of no concernment, or spoke in a strange Language, which they understood not. Was he but telling them the way to thrive in the World, and get store of Riches, they would hear him more attentively, and remember better what he said to them, and not think they had done enough when they had stood in the Church for an hour, as now they do. He that hath made any trial, may easily see that this sort of People do not give the same heed to one that discourseth to them about the matters of their Souls, as they do to him that speaks of earthly things. If you talk with a Citizen about his Trade, or with a Country-man about his Corn, or Cattle, or the Weather, or any the like Subjects, they can hold discourse with you well enough; but if you come to speak of the unseen Kingdom, and the way thereto, what need we have to search into our Souls, to see that we have got a good sound Title to that Glory. If you do but tell them of the shortness and uncertainty of Life, exhorting them therefore to get well pre-

prepared for Death and Judgment, how strange is such Language as this to the Ears of many? Some laugh at it as babbling, others give you a bare hearing, but are little affected with the weightiest matters deliver'd in the most piercing words that a Man knows how to speak. Nay, many times they'll be taken up with other thing so much, as not to mind or understand what is laid to them; nor do they afterwards remember it; but are as much moved with the barking of a Dog, or blowing of the Wind, as with the most serious affectionate Exhortations you can give them. And indeed how can Men take any great pleasure to hear of things that are not in their own Element, but as it were out of their reach? Would not the plain Country-man be ready to laugh and wonder at a Scholar that should talk to him in Latin, or make him tedious Discourses of any point of Philosophy, though he spoke in plain English? What's all this to him? He understands it not; or if he did, he may think, what should he be the better for it? And does not the Word of God tell us, that the *natural Man receives not the things of the Spirit, but they seem foolishness to him, because they are Spiritually discerned*. The Doctrine of Regeneration by the Spirit, to those that never felt it, is still as strange as it was to *Nicodemus*. And except we have before-hand got some inward apprehension of the things that we hear of, all talk of them is but as an empty sound, that signifies nothing. Wherefore no marvel, if they who think so seldom, and understand so little of God, and Christ, and a Work of Grace to be wrought on their Hearts, are no more affected nor stirred when they hear of them. And whilst they perceive no Profit they should get by these things, what should they hearken to them for? They cannot by all you say, get one penny more in their Purse, nor a Meals Meat, nor a Suit of Cloaths; and these are the most desirable Enjoyments they are acquainted with. And its no great wonder, when we consider the Education of the common sort, if they be of such a wretched Temper. For perhaps they were born and brought up



by Parents like themselves, that knew not how to acquaint them what they were made for, in any such manner as was likely to do them good; and, it may be, never so much as led them to School, to learn to read English; and in their Childish Years it cannot be thought they should have much understanding in Religion, when they think of little else but their Meat and Play; and when they grow up to riper Years, they are set to Trades, and to work for their Livings; (I speak of the meaner sort) and when they come to be settled in the World, and have Wife and Children, then they have enough to do to provide for their Families, and cannot spare time to learn the way to Heaven; and if they live to be aged, they think themselves too old to learn, and are too deep rooted in their ways to be drawn to forsake them without little less than a Miracle, and so there are multitudes even within the sound of the Gospel, that live and dye in lamentable Ignorance and Senselessness. I know all this while in every Estate and Time through which they pass, the most have Opportunities for learning their Duty, if they had any heart to it: But their Minds are still possessed with something else.

And tho' they may be somewhat constant in keeping their Church, yet this being a thing they have always been wont to, before they knew what they did, they still hold on in a customary manner, without duly considering what they come thither for; not thinking that the Minister speaks to them, and about Matters that are for Life or Death: The Discourses also which they hear being upon particular Subjects, they are like to profit the less by them, in that they have not such a sound and clear Knowledge of the chief Points of Religion, as may enable them to understand and profit by Sermons. And though from Children they may some of them be able to repeat their Creed, and Commandments, and Lord's Prayer, yet truly it is very easie to say these over a thousand times without being much affected with them, or well understanding them, only pattering them over by

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rote ; especially if they never had these Principles clearly laid open and explained to them. It may be also many of these never had any particular close Counsel given them, tending to awaken them to an apprehension of their Condition, to convince them of their Sin and Misery by Nature, and put them upon searching in good earnest after the way to escape Damnation, and be truly happy for ever. Or if they have been so exhorted, yet they will not be brought to think of these things soundly by themselves, and to seek God by Prayer for Direction and Assistance. It is no easie nor trifling matter for a Man wholly to change his Thoughts, Purposes, Affections, and manner of Life, as all must do that turn from Sin to true Godliness. Such a Change as this is not likely to be wrought without much Consideration, and sober settled Resolutions on Man's part, to which the Grace of God will not be wanting to make them effectual. I know it is also the Grace of God that puts upon them, but yet it is a Man himself that by the assistance of this Grace must thus consider, and thus resolve. But now when should People set upon this work of considering *what they should do to be saved* ? Something or other will happen in the way that keeps them from the work, or takes them off before it comes to any good issue. Either they are sleeping or working, eating or drinking, or playing or idling, dressing or undressing, or have some whither to go, or some Body to speak to, or in some Company that they cannot leave, or have some Business in their Heads which they are contriving, or else are in Sickness that unfits them for Action, or some Trouble hath befallen them which puts their Minds out of order, or some Happiness and Prosperity which puffs them up with a foolish flashy Joy ; or they have some brave things in expectation which they are musing on, and pleasing themselves with before-hand. Some such Matters as these, I dare say, fill the Heads and Hearts of most from one Years end to another throughout their whole Lives. These and such like are the things that come into their Minds as soon as they

they are awake, and then presently they are set about one thing or other, or light into some Company that takes them up for that day, and the like happens to morrow and the next day; and whilst the present Time never appears convenient for the solemn performance of this great Work of Repentance, it is by the most posted off till it is too late, and then in vain do they repent to all Eternity that they did not repent in Time. Now it could not be that they should never have a spare Day or Hour for the Consideration of, and setting upon the Work they were sent into the World for, but that they are guided in the course of their Lives by this practical deep-rooted Opinion, *That their only Business here, is to make this Life as comfortable as they can*; and therefore that to get Food, and Raiment, and Riches for themselves and their Children, to enjoy Pleasures, and be well accounted of in the World, are the best things which can be imagined, whereupon they wholly bend themselves to the attainment of these things, and on they go in a giddy heedless manner, never well examining whether this *their way be not their Folly*, not taking much notice what the Principles and Opinions are, which have the greatest power upon their Lives, and whence their Actions flow; which Principles may be so wrought into their Natures, that they shall lead and rule them whilst they are secret, and not distinctly known and weighed. And indeed this conceit, that the good things of this Life are most to be set by and sought after, hath its first rise from our corrupted Natures, which being fall'n off from God, and contrary to him, inclines us to seek Happiness any where, rather than in returning to his Love. And then in Childhood, and for some Years after, we have very weak apprehensions of any thing but what's before us, being wholly rul'd by our Senses. And when our miserable Mistakes have once taken root, and are become natural to us, its one of the hardest things in the World to be freed from them: for we are prone to be so conceited of our own ways, that we are by no means willing to be contradicted, much less



to call our selves Fools for all we have done, and begin the World anew ; as if we had never set one step forward in the right way. And it must needs be the more difficult to convince Men of the folly and baseness of such a carnal worldly Life, because they observe it to be the custom of the most about them, high and low, even of such as are counted wise and judicious, worshipful and honourable Persons. And what may they think, can they be so foully mistaken, who did but follow the courtes which they saw such Men lead before them ? And this indeed is one great Cause of the Mistakes and Destruction of Men, that when they come into the World, they chuse rather to follow the Examples of their Neighbours than the Rules of right Reason, which they should gather from God's Holy Word, and a due examination of things ; and therefore they take to those Actions, and that manner of Life which they see others follow, without well thinking whether they do wisely or not : Just as if a Man should see a company of People upon the way running as for their Lives, pretending that they are in pursuit of some great matters, and thereupon should presently set in with them, and run along as fast as they, without farther enquiry what they look for ; till at length when they are all tired, he perceives they had no other Design but perhaps to catch Flies, which when they have, they know not what to do with ; or to lay hold on some pretty Bird which they could not overtake : Even thus when a Man sees those about him running and riding, striving and sweating to get Houses and Lands, and all outward Enjoyments, he thinks it needless to enquire whether these things be worthy all their labour ; no, that's taken for granted : For sure, may he think, these Men are no Fools, but know well enough what they do, and therefore without deliberation upon the matter, he joins with the rest in labouring and contriving for these worldly things, taking all the Pleasure in them that they will possibly yield. And whatever Help is afforded them for the carrying on of this Design, they will readily and thankfully comply with.

with. If you supply them with what they were seeking for, they will greedily receive it, or if you will give them sure Directions how to get it, they will hearken to you, and diligently follow your Advice. But whatever is presented, that no ways conduceth to these their carnal ends, that which makes them no richer nor higher in the World, nor gives their Senses any delight, is like to be altogether slighted by them. What mean thoughts therefore must they needs have of Sermons, Sacraments, and all Spiritual Advantages, which are the only Means for getting of an Happiness quite of another nature from that they are seeking after?

I hope this large Preface (which indeed I did not design) will not be altogether useless, nor seem impertinent, since they who so little care for hearing or reading God's Word, for Prayer or receiving Sacraments, who are listless to all Duties, and feel no sweetness in them, all such may hence learn what is the root and ground of this Distemper, what it is that makes them out of taste with these rich and savoury Provisions which all healthful Souls do so dearly love, even because their secret, but most powerful, Thoughts are, *that they have nothing better than their Bodies to provide for; and that to do this is the chiefest Business they have, and that nothing is of any great use which makes not for this end.* But it would be quite otherwise with them, if they were indeed clearly convinced, and soundly perswaded that they have Souls which will never dye, and that these are the best part, and deserve most care, and are as much to be preferred before the Body, as a Man before the Horse which he rides on; and that these their immortal Souls can only be made happy by the Favour of God, out of which they are fallen by sinning against him, and that the great work of this Life is to get all Breaches made up betwixt God and them, that so when they leave this World, they may be restored to perfect Happiness in the Enjoyment of God; and that they can no way be thus reconciled to God but by Jesus Christ, by whose Merits and Mediation  
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their Sins may be pardoned, and by whose Holy Spirit (which is given by the Father through him) they can only be so changed and sanctified that they may be made *meet for the Inheritance of the Saints*, in the Heavenly Light of God's Presence and Love. Was the sound Belief of these plain, great, and commonly acknowledged Truths, but well rooted in the Hearts of Men, so as to over-power and change their Affections, we should soon perceive them to be other kind of Persons in all their Behaviour, if they took it for the business of their Lives to *work out their Salvation*; being convinced that they had nothing in this World to do but this, and what is in order to it; then would they diligently labour after a Saving-knowledge of a Crucified Christ, which comprehends in it the whole of Religion. And then they would highly prize, and diligently attend upon those Means which Christ hath appointed for the manifesting himself, and conveying his Saving-benefits to the Soul. They would take care to be found in those ways wherein Christ is like to be found. Whatever had relation to him would be very much esteemed by them; and they would never be at quiet till they had done their best to make it sure, that they had got an Interest in him, and through him a Title to the Father's Everlasting Love. They would then rightly inform themselves what's required of all that must be saved by Christ, and these Conditions they would endeavour to come up to, and perform. They would be willing to enter into the most solemn Covenant with him; to take him for their Saviour in all his Offices, by him to be brought to that Glory which God hath prepar'd for true Believers. And the keeping of this Covenant would be their study and care through the whole course of their Life. Now though considering these things it might appear a very fit Method for the curing of Mens Mistakes, and direct them in the way to Blessedness, first to represent and demonstrate to them that they have Immortal Souls; and that the Love of God is their only Portion; and that this can no way be obtained but by the Lord

Jesus;



Jesus; and then to shew what is required to make us partakers of Happiness by him; yet since these things are in some sort known, and readily confest by the most, I shall at present wave this Method, and chuse rather to drive at the last of these, which will be found to contain all; namely, to direct and exhort them to enter into Covenant, and make a thorough closure with Jesus Christ, that through him their Sins may be subdued and pardoned, their Persons and Natures reconcil'd to God, that they may be blessed for ever in Communion with him. And even this is my chief Design in laying down the following Directions to a due preparation for, and a right receiving of the Lord's Supper, and in giving Motives to the serious and frequent performance of that Duty, which I look upon principally, *as a solemnizing and re-  
stifying our Covenant with God by Jesus Christ; and the sincer-  
ity of the Heart in making this Covenant, and our faith-  
fulness in keeping it, is the very heart and scope of Christi-  
anity.* For my Intention in treating of this Subject, is not merely to perswade People to come to the Lord's Table (alas what a poor thing is that to be rested in) but to instruct them for a right coming to, and hearty receiving of Christ himself; then to come to the Sacrament, there to make and renew their Covenant with him in a more formal and express manner, the more to affect, and deeplier to engage themselves. For this being a sensible and solemn thing, will be apt to make the stronger impression upon Mens Spirits, and perhaps they will be sooner perswaded to this work, because it is so much fitted to Sense it self. But the great danger is, lest they should rush upon that which they understand not the reason of, and think they have done enough by bare receiving the Sacrament, without considering to what purpose they do it; which would be great madness, and of worse consequence, than for a Man to run and lay his Hands upon the Book, and kiss it, and use the like Ceremonies of an Oath, and never mind what he swears to, nor afterwards think what he hath done, though it was  
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about a matter of Life and Death. And therefore I shall endeavour, by God's assistance, to prevent this miscarriage, by shewing what is the nature and design of this Ordinance, in a right participation whereof consists so much of Religion; since hereby a Man professeth and engageth himself to be a sincere obedient Christian, which may be understood by this comparison before I come to speak to it more fully, that the more ignorant Reader may the sooner have the Notion fixt on his Mind. It is much what, as if the Governour of a City, after there had been a seditious Insurrection of the Citizens, should offer Pardon to all that would acknowledge their Fault, beg his Pardon, and return to their former Subjection, and peaceable Behaviour; and moreover should enjoin all that were thus affected, to come to take a piece of Money which he would give abroad, or to partake of a Feast which he would make on purpose for the entertainment of such; now would it not be madness, and gross impudence, and dissembling, for any to receive this Money, or go sit at this Table, who were resolved yet to continue their Rebellion, and would imploy that very Money, and the Strength they received from his Meat, against him that gave them; when as hereby they were to testifie their Resolutions to be faithful and obedient? Even thus hath it pleased the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of rebellious degenerate Mankind, to proclaim free and full Pardon to all that will heartily repent of, and turn from their wicked ways, and take him for their Lord and Saviour, and submit to his Directions for their attainment of Happiness; and withal he hath commanded all that will thus become his Disciples, first to be list-ed under him by Baptism, whereby they are visibly entered amongst the number of professing Christians, and afterwards they who were Baptized in Infancy are to come to this Sacramental Feast, and there to join with their fellow Believers, in a Personal Profession of their willingness and resolution to stand to that Covenant, whereinto they were engaged by Baptism, in testimony whereof, they

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eat the Bread, and drink the Wine, whereby the Body and Blood of Christ is represented, as I shall further shew anon. Now would it not in like manner, be a strange piece of Folly, and monstrous Hypocrisy, for any Man to rest satisfied with this having been Baptized, or his receiving the Lord's Supper, and think himself therefore a Christian good enough, without taking care to perform those Promises which he then made, but rather encourage himself in Sin by the consideration of what he hath done, as if he might the more safely rebel against God, because he had expressly vowed against all such Rebellion? Could there be a more desperate, dangerous Wickedness than to make such a wilful Mistake? And yet I wish there be not thousands guilty of it. Alas, alas, how few that have taken the earnest-penny, and wear Christ's Colours, that ever think to any purpose what they are hereby bound to? How many in effect renounce their Baptism by their ungodly Lives, and either neglect the Lord's Supper, or come to it to pacify their Consciences, that they may sin the more freely, rather than to strengthen and engage themselves against every Sin? As for Baptism, I shall not insist on it, though I grant this is the leading Sacrament appointed for the Testimony of our first being devoted to God, which Engagement we ought to call to remembrance, and renew at the Lord's Supper, whereof, according to my Promise, I now come to speak.

## C H A P. II.

*What it is to do this (to celebrate the Communion) in remembrance of Christ. And,*

*I. That it includes the true Knowledge of him.*

**B**EING desirous to contribute some Assistance to those that need it, to bring them (through God's Blessing) to a Conscientious Performance of this great Duty,



I observe there are two sorts of Persons faulty herein, either such as neglect it, or that miscarry and fail in the manner of doing it. Those that neglect it are either such that do it out of meer wilfulness, as the grossly vicious, that will not come to this Sacrament, because they think this would lay an Obligation upon them to forsake those Sins which they never intend to part with, whatever comes on't; and the stupid senseless ones, that know not the worth, nor see the need of this Ordinance, or any other Duties of Religion, who live as Heathenishly, as if they had never heard of God and Christ, and another World; nor do they care to be instructed in these Points, as if they were not at all concerned in them: Or else they are such that abstain from it out of doubting and fear, not thinking themselves worthy, or not knowing whether they are worthy or not. Of this sort there are many good Christians, who too much indulge their own melancholly and dispondent Apprehensions; and also many weaker, but, I hope, honest well-meaning People, who seem to have a great esteem for this Sacrament, but having always heard what a dangerous thing it is to receive it unworthily, dare not venture upon it, not being well acquainted with the Nature and Reason of it, and being doubtful whether they are fit to come or not, being also, I fear, too languid and heartless in desiring after it, or in making Preparation for it; and for such as these principally do I intend my Directions. By those that are guilty of Miscarriage in the doing of this Duty, I mean such as rush upon it ignorantly and rashly, not well weighing what they do, and who, notwithstanding their accustomed attendance at the Lord's Table, continue their old sinful Course of Life; These also, I hope, may receive some Benefit from the following Discourse, together with the most profane and ignorant, whilst I shall endeavour plainly to shew the intention of this Sacrament, and perswade them to attend thereupon in a regular manner. For since, in behalf of those for whom especially I write this, my great Business

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is to shew who it is that is worthy to partake of this Ordinance, and wherein this Worthiness doth consist ; the Method I will take shall be this, namely, to shew for what purpose it was appointed by Jesus Christ, and thence to discover those Qualifications and Graces which are required in the Communicants, that they may receive it aright to those Purposes for which it was appointed ; and after I have done this, I shall lay down some Arguments or Motives to quicken all to come to, and celebrate it in this due manner ; and then briefly direct those that intend to come.

As to the first, what was the Reason and End why this Sacrament was appointed ? I know not whence we should be better informed, than by looking back to the time of its first Appointment, and to see what Christ tells us he did ordain it for ; and this we may find expressly set down, *Luke 22. 19.* When he had broke the Bread, and distributed, he adds, *This do in remembrance of me.* And the same words he used also after the delivery of the Wine, as appears by the Apostle *St. Paul's* relation, *who delivered unto them what he had received of the Lord, 1 Cor. 11. 24, 25.* Where, after the giving the Cup, is added, *This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me ;* and so again, *ver. 26.* saith the Apostle, *As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death till he come,* that is, you publish and represent it to the World, you acknowledge and commemorate it. So that by this it is plain, that the great end of this Sacrament, to which all others may be reduced, is, *that by the Celebrating thereof we may remember Jesus Christ, and especially that we may keep up the Memory of that inestimable Mercy to Mankind, his dying for us ;* a Mercy which should never be forgotten by those on Earth, and shall never be forgotten by those in Heaven. Now hence it follows, that they who are in a capacity and fitness rightly to remember Christ and his Death, are worthy to partake of this Sacrament which was let apart for that purpose : Wherefore without go-  
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ing any farther, I shall shew what is necessarily required to, contained in, or immediately flows from this remembrance of Christ, that so we may the more distinctly apprehend what is required of us to make us worthy Receivers. And herein, I suppose, will be found comprised those several Graces usually laid down for the due qualification of Communicants, as Knowledge, Repentance, Faith, New-obedience, Brotherly Love and Thankfulness. And as I go along, I intreat thee, Reader, seriously to look into thy own Heart, and examine thyself whether thou findest in thee these Qualifications or not; whether thou findest those Graces wrought in thy Heart, which may enable thee so to remember thy Redeemer, as may be acceptable to him, that so if thou findest thyself such a one as is described, thou mayst give God the praise, and take to thyself the Comfort of so great a Mercy, and be encouraged to proceed in this and all other holy Duties; but if thou findest the contrary, that thou mayst with all speed and earnestness see to get thy Heart changed, and thy Wants supplied. And to this end (since I intend no other Application) I shall under every Head endeavour to help thee in thy enquiry into the state of thy Soul, and in thy seeking after those Graces which thou mayst be convinced thou art destitute of, and hast hitherto been content without them; and in this part I shall be larger, as taking it to be most necessary; though having so large a field before me, I shall labour to confine myself.

1. First then, in order to a right remembrance of Jesus Christ, there is necessarily supposed *a knowledge of him*: for our Memory contains only those persons or things which we before have known. How could he keep the *Fifth of November*, as a Thanksgiving for our deliverance from the Popish Powder-Plot, who hath not some knowledge before-hand, that such a Plot there was laid by the Papists, and that by Divine Providence we were delivered from it? No more can any Man remember Christ, as he ought, at the Sacrament, except he



knows who this Christ is in his Person and Natures, and what his Offices are, what he came into the World for, what he hath done, and will do for us. And indeed this right Knowledge of Christ necessarily requires and contains a Knowledge of all the chief Points of Religion, of which I hope thou art not ignorant who ownest the Name of a Christian. It's a shame for thee if thou art, having such Means and Opportunities to inform thy self, as thou enjoyest; having liberty to read thy Bible, plain Catechisms, and other good Books, and to hear God's Word publickly Preach'd. Notwithstanding all which advantages, I doubt there are many to be found, who are very dark, even in the first Principles of Christianity, as not accounting it any part of their business to trouble their heads with such matters. And that which a Man makes no great reckoning of, nor thinks himself much concerned in, though he may hear it an hundred times over, he'll scarce have so clear an insight into it, as he that hath heard it but once or twice with diligence and attention, applying his mind to it, as to a matter that is for his Life. He that hears a Physician directing him to a Medicine that will recover him from some desperate Disease, is far likelier (if he have the use of his Reason) to take notice of, and fix into his Mind what's told him, than another that sits by, who holds himself nothing concerned in it. So surely if People thought it any great matter to save their Souls for ever, they would soon see to get acquainted with the way to Salvation, and not remain in such brutish Ignorance as multitudes do. And for the help of such I shall run over those Heads of Religion, which more especially are required to enable us aright to remember Christ at this Commemoration-feast, which he hath establish'd in his Church. Know then that God at first made Man in an happy Estate, even *Adam* and *Eve* our first Parents, who if they had continued happy, so should, 'tis probable, we their Posterity have been too; but the Condition of their continuing in that Estate, being perfect Obedience to all God's Commands,

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they fell from it by breaking a particular Command, eating of the Fruit of a certain Tree in the Garden of Eden, whereof God hath enjoined them not to eat, even of the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*, as you may read at large *Gen. 3.* Thus their Hearts were turned off from God, and fix'd upon the Creature, which was pleasing to their Senses. Hereupon they became liable to the Wrath of God, who had before threatned, *that in that day they eat thereof they shall dye the Death*, which included in it all kind of Misery, whatever it should please God to inflict. They being thus become Sinners, they begat Children like themselves, *conceived in Sin, and brought forth in Iniquity*; for who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? And beside that Corruption of Nature which did cleave to their Children, the Guilt of their Sin might also in some sort most justly be imputed to them, they being as common Persons, represented all Mankind, who fell with them when they fell. But their Children, as they grew up, became guilty of actual Sins in their own Persons, to which their wicked Natures did incline them, which did more expose them to the Wrath of God. This Condition was the World brought into by Sin, become ignorant of God, prone to all Wickedness, and deserved the greatest Misery, even everlasting Torment; and in this estate God might justly have left us, he might have *given us up to our own Hearts Lusts*, and so one by one as we came into the World, and rebell'd against him, might have destroy'd us for ever without any remedy. Yet he did not thus, but was pleas'd out of his own infinite Wisdom to provide for us a Saviour, when we had thus undone, but could not help our selves. And who was this Saviour, but his own eternal only begotten Son, very God of very God, who in Fulness of Time became Man, and by the Power of the Holy Ghost was conceived in the Womb of the Virgin *Mary*, and born of her without the least stain of Sin, and was God and Man in a wonderful manner united in One Person. This was that Jesus Christ,

of whom we read in the Gospel, who after he had some time preach'd his Gospel to the *Jews*, laid down his Life as a Sacrifice to make satisfaction for the Sins of the World, and rose again on the third day, and after forty days continuance on Earth, he ascended into Heaven, and there is exalted to sit on the Right Hand of God in that Human Nature which he assumed, and there he *lives for ever to make Intercession for us*, that the Benefits he hath purchas'd may be given out to the Sons of Men. And these Benefits are such, that shew him to be a perfect Saviour every way fitted to our Necessities. For by his undertaking this Work of our Redemption, he did as it were reprieve the World, and kept us from being suddenly destroyed by Divine Justice, which otherwise would have laid hold on us, and did obtain for us that we should be tryed once again for our Lives, so that our first Fall should not be our Damnation, if we would accept of the way of Salvation which he had procured for, and revealed to us. Now since our first Happiness did consist in our being like to God, being righteous, and holy, and obedient to him, that it might appear that Christ consulted for his Fathers Honour, as well as our Interest; the way to Salvation which he appointed was this, That we should love God above all, and count it our greatest Happiness to be reconciled to him; that we should humbly acknowledge and repent of all our Sins, of Nature and Practice, whereby we had provoked his Anger against us, and be sincerely willing to live in Obedience to his Laws, and that we should own him the Lord Jesus as our only Redeemer, and depend upon him only for ability to perform these Conditions, and to obtain the Pardon of Sin, and the Favour of God upon performance of them. And then that we might have this Ability, who by the Fall were become weak and unable for Good, but strongly bent to Evil; Christ by his Death obtained of the Father, that the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Trinity, should be employ'd to bring Men to the performance of those Con-

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ditions which Christ required of all whom he would save : And accordingly the Holy Ghost, in pursuance of this Work, did inspire the Apostles, and their followers, to write and preach the Gospel, and sealed to the Truth of it with Miracles, for the Conviction of all that should hear it : And in some Places in all Ages hath enabled Men to make it known. And moreover this Holy Spirit doth accompany the Word to the Hearts of the Hearers, and where he is received, doth enlighten the Mind, and soften the Heart, and heal, and change, and sanctifie the Nature of Man, and restores him to the Image of his Maker, and begets in him a strong Love to God, and a willingness to please him in all things, and brings him to an hearty Sorrow for, and an Hatred of all his Sins, and inclines and enables him to come to Christ, to believe in him, to love and highly to esteem him from this Work of Redemption which he hath wrought, ascribing it wholly to his Merit, that he hath hopes of Mercy from God, and any Power to please him. And then for all those who by this Assistance of the Spirit are made willing thus to come to Christ, and to God by him, for these Christ hath purchas'd that their Sins should be forgiven them, and greater measures of the Spirit bestowed on them ; in a word, that they should have all things good for them here, and be received into everlasting Glory hereafter. But all they who reject these offers of Sanctification and Salvation, shall dye in their Sins, and be everlastingly in Torments with the Devil and his Angels. And this same Jesus Christ will be the Judge of all Men, and at the end of the World shall come with great Glory and Power, and raise up the Bodies of all that were dead, and change those that are alive, and shall pronounce, and cause to be executed, the Sentence of Absolution and Glorification upon the Righteous, and the Sentence of Condemnation upon the Wicked. This is that Jesus, the Redeemer of the fallen World, whose Memory ought to be so precious to you. And these were the weighty Causes,

Causes, and the glorious Effects of that Death which you shew forth, and keep up the remembrance of it, in celebrating the Sacrament. I suppose it needless to turn you to the particular Texts of Scripture proving these things, they being so common and well known, and the Truth of them so plain, that they cannot well be doubted of by any that own the Christian Religion. And I hope they are neither so many, nor so difficult, that you should pretend you want Time, or Learning, or Wit to get well acquainted with them. I dare say, you could learn other kind of matters than these, if you could get any Worldly Advantage by it. If Books were printed that should teach you how to be Rich and Honourable, to live in Ease and Pleasure, to enjoy Health, long Life, and all kind of Prosperity, you would pore sufficiently upon such Books, and beat your Brains Day and Night, but you would get to understand and remember them. But if indeed you have so little regard to your Souls, that you will perish for lack of knowing those things which might easily be known, your Damnation is just. And as for you that think the most sottish Ignorance is excusable, because you are no Scholars, and yet take your selves for as good Christians as the best, let me tell you plainly, if you be without the knowledge of these principal Heads of Religion, you are not fit to be so much as call'd Christians. Are you Disciples of Christ, that are so blockish and stupid, that you have not yet learnt the first Principles, which he teacheth his Scholars? Nay, if you refuse to learn them, you thereby renounce Jesus Christ; to wit, as he is your Propheet and Teacher; which if you do, expect not Salvation from him. And, as without being acquainted with these Fundamental Truths, you are able to perform no Duty aright, so especially not this of receiving the Lord's Supper; for, I say, can he remember Christ as he should, that knows not who he is, what he has done for him, or in what need he stands of him? And they, who being in this wilful Blindness, venture upon this Ordinance, must

must needs do it to their own hurt, coming to it as a common Meal, or meerly for Custom or Fashion sake; and so are guilty of the very same Miscarriage, which the Apostle represents as so dangerous, *1 Cor. 11. 29. They eat the Bread, and drink the Wine, not discerning the Lord's Body*, not having the Knowledge of Christ, who is there represented, whereby they might be enabled to give him that Reverence and Honour which is required of all that are admitted to these Mysteries.

I need not sure spend time in examining the Reader whether he know these Truths before laid down, or not. If thou hast the use of thy Reason, thou canst tell, I hope, what it is thou knowest, and what thou dost not; wherefore take thy self to Task, and go over the several Points of Religion, as I have before briefly mentioned them, if thou thinkest fit, and take account of thy own apprehension and understanding, and where thou findest thou art most wanting, be diligent to inform and satisfie thy self, and to this purpose make Conscience of hearing the Word preach'd, and of reading the Holy Scriptures in private, and get well acquainted with the Grounds of Religion, as you may find them in Catechisms, or the plainest Books that treat of them. But think it not enough to be able to say the bare words, to repeat your Creed without Book, or the like, but labour well to understand them, and fix them deeply upon your Mind, as those things which are of greatest necessity to be known and remembred of any in the World. But yet barely to know and remember them, will not profit you, except you digest and improve them, that they move your Affections, and guide you in your Conversation. It's a most lamentable Mistake to think, that the meer saying of what you believe, and what you are to do, will save your Souls; as if there were some strange force in the very words, which would make them useful to all that should patter them over; for by this means a *Parrot* might pass for a good Christian. If you had a Receipt given you, directing you how to cure the



Tooth-ach, do you think it would take away the Pain to get it without book, and say it over by rote? Would you not rather see to read it, and make use of the Medicine which it should appoint? Even thus must you read God's Word, and good Books, to know what is your Duty, that you may set with all your might to the doing of it. And indeed your Knowledge is defective, till it come thus to affect your Heart: wherefore let that be the Mark by which you may judge of its Truth and Sincerity, if it raise your Affections, and leads you forth to Action, 1 *John* 2. 3, 4. For if you know that God hath in himself all Fulness and Goodness, and know that you are needy and indigent, and can only receive supply and satisfaction from him, you cannot but desire after him, and seek how to get a part in his Love. If you know that you are in your selves lost undone Creatures, and that Jesus Christ, and he alone, is able and willing also to recover and save you, you will then berake your selves to him, for Healing and saving Mercy. If you know that Sin is your Disease, Bondage and Dishonour, and Holiness your Glory, Liberty and Health, you will readily comply with the Spirit of God to be freed from Sin, and to be made as holy as your Nature is capable. This then is true and saving Knowledge, which must be in all that can affectionately remember Christ at the Communion. Of this Knowledge Christ speaks, *John* 17. 3. *This is Life Eternal to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* And of this the Prophet speaks, *Isa.* 53. 11. *By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many;* that is, he shall justify those who have such a sound and working Knowledge of him as leads them to the performance of what he requires of them. For if Men once come indeed to know that Christ is the Son of God, who earnestly desires their good, and enjoins them nothing but what makes thereto, surely they will readily then hearken to and obey him. All this I add to *Knowledge*, because it is very imperfect 'till it become thus fruitful; and will not

not vindicate those in whom it is, from the imputation of Ignorance.

Now to get your Knowledge to be thus powerful upon your Hearts and Lives, I cannot advise you to any more necessary course than these two, 1. *Humbly to beg of God to work the Truth with power upon your Souls*, that you may receive it in the love thereof. When you go to hear, or sit down to read, beseech God to accompany the Word by his mighty Spirit, that it may sink into your Minds, and not become unprofitable; but that it may lighten and awaken you, and reach to the very inward of your Souls, and give you such insight into your selves, and such a discovery of your Duty, that you may vigorously be carried on to the performance of it. And then 2. *You must often consider of those Truths that you know*; you must dwell upon them in your Minds till you are moulded, changed and wrought upon by them. For want of this Consideration chiefly it is, that so many remain in Ignorance; and that many others, who have some slight Knowledge, are no more bettered by it; for you must meditate upon what you read or hear, that you may the more clearly and distinctly understand it; which you cannot do, if words slip out of your thoughts as soon as they are out of your ears. And then, after the Doctrines of the Gospel are well understood, you must farther consider wherein they concern your particular case, and what use you are to make of them; for otherwise how is it possible they should profit you? Though you have never so much Book-learning, and Brain-knowledge, what are you the better for all, if you improve it not to your own good, by this serious Consideration? Can you think ever to have a profitable saving Knowledge of Christ, if you use not seriously to think of him, what need you stand in of him, and what Benefit he will be to you, and what must be done to make him yours? Can you get your Sins mortified and pardoned, if you will not so much as bethink your self what an evil thing Sin is, and what your particular Sins are?

are? Can you be moved with the hopes of Glory, if you have it not in your thoughts? Can you escape your Danger if you forget it, and so are out of fear? If then you would ever have any profit by your Knowledge, follow the Apostle's Advice to *Timothy*, 2 Tim. 2. 7. *Consider what is said to thee at any time, and that's the next way to obtain from the Lord understanding in all things*; so likewise, 1 Tim. 4. 15. *Meditate on these things, give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all*. If you have no Time to spare purposely for Meditation, yet take Time as you are upon the way, or about any Business which will permit you. And let this be the chief subject of your Thoughts, which I am sure deserves them most, *even how you should do to obtain Salvation by Jesus Christ*; and never leave following on this Enquiry, till you be fully resolved to set about what's required of you to that purpose.

As there must be this sound Knowledge of Christ, and of the chief Points of Christian Religion in all that can duly remember Christ at the Sacrament, so it will be readily granted, that this Jesus Christ must be believed to be indeed the Saviour of the World, as is declared in the Scriptures; and all that is there laid down of his Incarnation, Life, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, Intercession, and coming again to Judgment, must be believed to be true. I will not make a distinct Head of this, because its necessarily supposed in the former, as I have explained it; for our knowledge of these Truths is never like to be effectual with us, if we are not first of all perswaded that they are Truths. And the Reader might be offended, if I should make any question, whether he believes the Christian Religion, and takes Scripture to be the Word of God, and acknowledges that Christ is the Son of God, and the promised Messiah, of whom the Prophets all along in the Old Testament foretold. But though there are few who openly deny, or seem to doubt of these things, yet I fear there is a great defect, and too common even in this part of Faith, which



which consists in an assent to the Truth of the Gospel. For many there are who take little pains to settle their Belief upon sure Foundations, which would bear a shaking, if any assault should be made; and can give little reason why they are of this Religion, or Opinion, rather than any other, except because this is that they learn'd of their Parents, and is profess'd by their Neighbours, and set up and countenanced by the Laws of the Land; and surely these are but weak Arguments. But here let me add as before, that granting you do believe all that the Gospel reveals, yet this is not enough except your Belief prevail with you to do what the Gospel requires in order to your Salvation. And this is indeed the surest way to get your Faith well strengthened and confirmed, even by yielding obedience to the Truth, and trying by your own Experience, what Benefit comes by conforming your selves to the Will of God revealed in the Gospel, whether you can find the Promises made to such obedient ones in any measure fulfilled to you; and when you have found this, you will say with the Apostle, *You are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, because you have begun to find it to be the Power of God to Salvation.* Our Lord himself told us, *John 7. 17. That if any Man will do his Will, he shall know of his Doctrine, whether it be of God or not.* This is like a Man's tasting of Honey, which will give him more assurance of its Sweetness than all Arguments could do; and this will make him confidently affirm it, though the cunning'st Sophister should endeavour by subtle Arguments to persuade him to the contrary, his Experience will confute them all. This is the reason why great Wits, and profound Scholars, sometimes turn Atheists and Infidels, whilst the honest weak Christian, that hath relish'd and well digested the Truths of Religion, holds them so firmly in his Heart rather than Brain, that he can dye for that which he cannot so well dispute for. Thus far then I hope you see its manifest, that to your right remembrance of Christ, and so to make you worthy Commu-

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nicants, its necessary that you know who this Christ is, and what you have to do with him, and to believe that he is indeed the Redeemer of Mankind, and that all that Scripture speaks of him is true.

### C H A P. III.

II. *A right remembring of Sin, the occasion of his Death. Of Repentance ; with Considerations to work and promote it.*

**I**T may as easily be understood, that if at the Sacrament you keep up a remembrance of Christ, and in an especial manner, *shew forth his Death till he come*, then you must needs remember what was the occasion of his dying, and that was the Sins of the World. Had there been no Sin, we had needed no Saviour. Had we continued in our first Estate, we had needed no Restorer. Now hence it will naturally follow, that no Man can duly celebrate the Sacrament, *whose Eyes have not been opened to see the exceeding great Evil that is in Sin, and to be convinced of his own Sins, so as to lament and hate, and resolve against them.* For is it possible for that Man to remember Christ's Death as he ought, that sees no hurt in that which put him to Death? Nay, that loves the very Nails and Spear that were thrust into his Hands, and Feet, and Sides, and intends to *crucifie him afresh*, when he is gone away? And all this doth he that never saw the odiousness of Sin, and that is not heartily set against it, but secretly retains and cherishes it. Can he rightly remember Christ's Death, who sees no great need he stood in of it, nor is sensible of any great Advantage that comes to him by it, but rather thinks Christ might have kept his Blood to himself; and it would be a Disadvantage to him to attain the Ends and Benefits of his Bloodshed? And such wretched blasphemous Thoughts

Thoughts in effect hath he that sees not his sad Estate by reason of Sin, and that thinks it would be to his loss to part with it. Wherefore since it evidently appears that true Repentance is so absolutely necessary to qualify and fit a Man for this Ordinance, where it is to be renewed, and to which he must come with an humble broken Heart, let me desire thee to put the question to thy own Heart, whether thou know'st by Experience, what it is to repent of, and be truly humbled for Sin? And that thou may'st know the better what I mean, let me ask thee, Didst thou ever yet seriously consider what thy Condition is by Nature, and by reason of thy careless sinful Life? And hast thou found thy self sensibly affected and stirred with this Consideration, so that thou hast been verily perswaded, that thou art in thy self a lost Creature, and except there be a way for Mercy, art like to perish for ever? And hast thou been convinced that Sin is the cause of all this Misery and Danger which thou art liable to? And hast thou hereupon heartily griev'd for, and bewail'd thy wretched miserable State? Hast thou been humbled for the Sin thou broughest into the World with thee, and for all the Sins which thou know'st by thy self, and canst remember thou hast at any time committed? Hast thou been careful to search into thy Heart, and to look back upon thy Life past, that thou mightest find out what thy particular Sins are, that thou may'st confess them before God, and forsake them? And hast thou indeed been so sensible of the evil of Sin, chiefly as it is Rebellion against that God who made thee, and hath sent his Son to Redeem, and Spirit to Sanctifie thee, and hath daily given thee so many Mercies to engage thee to please him? Hast thou, I say, seen so much vileness and baseness in thy dishonouring and provoking so good a God, that this Consideration hath melted and broke thy Heart, and wrought thee into a bitter hatred and loathing of every known Sin, so that thou hast earnestly desired to be delivered from it, which is so odious in its self, and so mischievous to thee? And  
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hast thou therefore been deliberately resolved, by the help of God, without any more delay, to put away far from thee whatever is displeasing to God, and to return to him from whom thou hast fell'n, and to an obedience to those Laws which thou hast violated and contemned? Examine thy self faithfully, whether thou hast ever experienced such a change of thy Mind as this I have described, which may well be call'd *Repentance unto Life*. Or rather on the other hand, dost thou not find that thou art such a one still as ever thou wast, as earthly and carnal as ever, as hard-hearted and stupid, and as fond of Sin as ever, and know'st not what it means to have thy Heart broken for thy Offences committed against the great God of Heaven and Earth? Nay, it may be thou prid'st thy self in being of the very same mind and disposition that thou art now, ever since thou canst remember. Thou art one that hast always lov'd God, and believed in Christ, and bore a good Conscience towards all Men, and then I fear all's little better than stark naught with thee: for though there may be multitudes of good People in times of Light, and having good Education, that cannot distinctly tell when they were in a more especial manner wrought upon, and brought home to God; yet few, if any, but can remember that once they were much worse than they are, even that they were too like the rest of the World, but now they find they are washed and cleansed: Perhaps when thou hast sworn, or been drunk, or committed any the like Wickedness, thou could'st cry, *God forgive me*, and say thou art a great Sinner, but still goest on, and remainest as bad as thou wast. If this indeed be thy case, if thou art yet a meer stranger to this Work of Christ upon thy Soul, who is *exalted* in the first place to *give Repentance*, thou art at present very unfit to drink of that Blood which was shed for, and which seals the *Remission of Sins*.

Now (that I may proceed in the Method I promised, by directing to the attainment of those Graces which  
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are wanting) in order to the breaking of thy hard Heart, and humbling thy Soul for Sin, I might advise thee in the first place to look back into thy Heart and Life, to find out thy particular Sins, not being content in the general to confess thy self a Sinner, as all Men are : for this is not so likely much to work upon thee ; but to fasten upon thy most remarkable Sins, and dwell upon and bewail them, and so all lesser Evils, and that *body of Death* which thou carriest about thee continually, which was born with thee. In this Method partly you may find *David's* Confession, *Psalms* 51. at the beginning to the 5th Verse. Further, I might direct thee earnestly to beg of God to open thy Eyes, and shew thee what thy Estate is, and discover to thee more of the evil of Sin, before thou feel its sad effects when Repentance will come too late. Moreover thou art to use all other means appointed for the working of a true and saving Sorrow for Sin, as to observe what God speaks against it in his Word, and to attend diligently to the most searching and awakening Preaching, and to be much employ'd in those Considerations that have a special tendency to the begetting of this frame ; and of this sort I might name several ; as for instance, to think frequently how great and gracious a God Sin is committed against, and what particular Reasons thou hast to serve and please him, from the Mercies and Means thou enjoyest ; think how he stands related to thee as thy Creator, Preserver, and Ruler, and therefore Disobedience to him is most odious, impudent and undutiful. Withal it's good to consider how much hurt Sin doth to the Soul, which is so excellent a Being ; how it defiles, debaseth, and disquiets it ; how it exposeth the whole Man to all kind of Evils and Sufferings here on Earth, and to Everlasting Torments hereafter, and deprives Men of those unspeakable Joys which are to be had with and from God. But to avoid tediousness, I shall pass over these, and many the like Considerations, and keeping to the Subject in hand, shall rather direct thee to fetch matter for Humiliation and Repentance from

from the Cross of Christ ; the remembrance whereof at the Sacrament should still keep up and renew thy Godly Sorrow. If then thou art one who never yet sawest any great hurt in Sin, but for all the ill Language which is given it, canst quietly and lovingly entertain it, let me beseech thee a while to fix thy Thoughts upon a Crucified Saviour, and then remain of this wretched Opinion if thou canst. Behold the Son of God become Man ; a most innocent holy Person, whose whole Life was spent in doing good, who heal'd Diseases, cast out Devils, pitied all that were afflicted, taught the Ignorant, pray'd for poor Sinners ; after all, behold this blessed Jesus, who had never in all his Life been guilty of the least Sin in Thought, Word, or Deed, nor ever gave just Cause of Offence to any Man living ; behold him, I say, in the Garden a little before his Crucifying, sorrowful even to Death, in such a bitter Agony that he sweat as 'twere great Drops or Clots of Blood ; and what inward Pains and Sorrows dost thou think must those needs be, which put him into such an unnatural Sweat as this, though his Patience was as much greater than any Mortal Mans, as his Sufferings themselves were ; for we cannot imagine that he who so calmly bore all those Indignities and Cruelties which were offered and inflicted by insolent Men, should be less patient in regard of those Sufferings which he underwent immediately from God ; but we may conclude that these were infinitely the greater. Then after this beginning of Sorrows, and after he had been most vilely abused, and set at naught by the Rulers, the chief Priests, the Soldiers, and common People ; after he had in a jeer been cloathed in a Purple Robe, with a Crown of Thorns on his Head, and a Reed in his Hand ; after he had been laugh'd at, spit on, whip'd and buffeted, behold him brought forth to be stretch'd upon the Cross, where his Enemies stood gazing, shouting, and wagging their Heads at him, whilst his tender Hands and Feet are struck through with Nails that fastened him to the Wood, and in his Soul he felt that Pain which



which wrung from him that doleful Complaint, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Now let me beg thee to dwell a while upon this Subject with the Reason and Bowels of a Man, and then tell me whether in thy Conscience thou think'st it was for a small matter that the Lord of Glory underwent such grievous Sufferings. What, was Christ so prodigal of his Blood as to shed it for a Trifle? Or was God so cruel as to put his own dearly beloved Son to all this Smart for an inconsiderable Thing? Certainly if thou art a Christian, thou canst not harbour any such base Thoughts. Well then, what was it that put Christ to all this Sorrow, and Shame, and Smart? Ah Friend, it was thy Sin and mine, and the rest of the Worlds, that was the cause, and canst thou then imagine it an harmless thing? If thou doubt of what I say, hear the plain Word of God, *Isa. 53. 3, 4, 5, 6. Surely he hath born our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities, the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all. 1 Pet. 2. 21. Christ also suffered for us, ver. 24. Who his own self bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree — Gal. 3. 13.* And at the Institution of his Supper he acquaints us, that his Blood was shed for the Remission of Sins, *Matth. 26. 28.* When Man had rebell'd against his Maker, and broke that Law which threatned Destruction to him that should break it, there was no other way that we are told of, but either he himself must undergo the Punishment he had deserved, or some one else on his behalf. And therefore Man being spared, there was found no way for the Satisfaction and Honour of offended Justice, but by these Sufferings which the Lord Jesus our Surety underwent; who being so glorious a Person, even the Son of God made Man, he only being made a Sacrifice for Sin could condemn Sin in the Flesh; discovering to all

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the World that Sin was a most hainous Evil, so hateful and displeasing to the blessed Majesty, that he would not forgive to any Man his Iniquity without Satisfaction made; and no other Satisfaction would he accept of but the Death of Christ, *who is become our Propitiation, and hath made an Atonement for us.* And can there possibly be imagined any Argument of greater weight to bring all considerative Persons to detest and forsake that which hath been found so mischievous? And give me leave to improve this Consideration in two or three particulars; that so it may be the clearer discerned, and the force of it more felt.

1. Methinks it may be great matter of Humiliation to us, *to think that we should be so hainously guilty in departing from God, and living in Rebellion against him, that we could not by any means avoid his deserved Wrath, but by these bitter Sufferings of the Lord Jesus.* Certainly, Reader, hadst thou been present when Christ was so abused by the cruel Jews and their Rulers, it would have mov'd thee to Compassion, if thou hadst only thought him Innocent. But if moreover, thou hadst known he endured all that for thy sake, would it not have affected thee much more? If thou hadst seen him spit upon, mock'd and stricken with the Palms of their Hands; if thou hadst beheld the Blood running down when he was scourged, or heard his Groanings in the Garden, or upon the Cross, and then hadst thought within thy self, *all this is for my sake, this have I been the cause of,* would it not have moved and melted thy Heart? If thou shouldst now see any of thy Friends put to cruel Tortures to free thee from them, would it not make thy Heart even bleed within thee? And why then may it not have the same effect upon thee, to set a dying Christ before thine Eyes, who as he became poor for our sakes, that we through his Poverty might be made rich, 2 Cor. 8. 9. So he was chastised that we might have peace, received stripes that we might have healing, as in that fore-quoted 53. of *Isaiah.* But yet I remember what our blessed Lord, when

when he was going to suffer, said to the Women that followed him weeping, *Luke 23. 28. Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for your selves and your Children*; so say I, poor Sinners, weep not for Christ out of a kind of pity to him, that he should unjustly (as to Men) be put to so great Smart, but weep for your selves and your Sins that were the Cause. And this is that I chiefly intend under this Head, that seeing Christ hath bore such an heavy Load upon thy account, among the rest, thou may'st hence learn the true nature and desert of Sin, of thy own Sins which thou art wont to make so light of. Certainly the very Torments of the Damned do not more plainly discover the Evil of Sin, and God's hatred of it, than the Sufferings of Christ do. For it is evident, that the greatness of the Punishment, where the Judge is knowing and upright, is a plain Argument of the greatness of the Offence. If you should see a Man by the way hung up alive in Chains, you would soon conclude it was for Murther, or some the most horrid Wickedness, that he was so dealt with. And as evident it is, that the worth and eminency of the Person who is punish'd, speaks the Offence proportionably of a higher Nature. If we should hear that a King, who is both just and merciful, had caused his own Son's Right Hand to be cut off, we might well conclude there was some more than ordinary Cause; but especially if he, being guiltless himself, had suffered this for another Man's sake, we should reasonably infer, that it was a Crime of the highest nature, for which was made so dear Satisfaction. Now what must we think when we see the Lord Jesus upon the Cross, who though he felt Pain and Sorrow, only as he was in our Nature, yet was that Nature so nearly united to the Divine, that it's said, *God purchased his Church with his own Blood, Acts 20. 28. so 1 John 3. 16. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his Life for us, that is, Christ, who was God as well as Man, laid, &c.* The like, to mention no more, we find *Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8.* If then we consider one so far ad-



vanced above Men, laid so low ; one *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners*, suffering such grievous things, may we not in all reason conclude, that the Sin which caused this was out of measure *sinful*, for that's the worst word that can be given it ; its Nature being so odious that nothing can be said of it sufficient to express its vileness. Good Reader, then let me perswade thee to judge of thy Sin by this evidence, and never more to hearken to thy own Flesh, or to the subtle Tempter, or thy foolish Companions, that would make thee believe there's no furt hurt in those Sins that please thee, that thou need'st not be so careful to avoid them, or so deeply humbled for them. That Devil, who would perswade thee that it is such a matter of nothing to provoke God to anger, knows and feels the contrary in himself. So much hurt as there is in a Devil compared to an Angel, in Hell compared to Heaven, so much hurt he hath learnt there is in Sin. Beware, lest thou come to learn it by such sad experience thy self. But that I may finish this, let me once again ask thee, whether thou dar'st say, that Christ underwent greater Sufferings than he needed to have done, in order to make Satisfaction for our Sins, or that God laid on him more than in Justice he ought, when he was become our Surety ? If thou dar'st not affirm either of these, beware how thou mincest and lessenest thy Sins when thou should'st repent of, and bewail them ; for by so doing, thou dost in effect thus blaspheme God. Oh then let Sin be call'd to the Bar ; indict it for a Murtherer, as well thou may'st, accuse it as guilty of the bloody Death of the Lord of Life, shew all the Wounds and Stabs that it gave him ; and see that thou pronounce Sentence against it, even utter Death without any pity or remorse ; and heartily lament thy own baleness, in having so long given loving entertainment to such a Murtherer and Traytor. And when ever thou findest any favourable thoughts of Sin arising in thy breast, call to mind what it did against Christ, and let that make thy Heart rise against it, and even

even boil with an holy Hatred and desire of Revenge. And let the frequent remembrance of those Streams of Blood, which thy Sins fetch'd from him, open thy Eyes to shed Streams of Tears; or however work thy Heart to an unfeigned Sorrow for all thy Iniquities, for which thy Saviour was thus wounded.

2. The next thing I would have thee to enlarge thy Meditations upon in the Sufferings of Christ, in order to the bringing of thee to a kindly Repentance, is that *unspeakable Love which is hereby manifested to the Sons of Men*: When I speak of Repentance, I mean not meerly thy shedding of a few Tears, but an inward change of thy Mind, as I before shewed, that thou should'st turn from Sin to the Love of God; and I know not what can be more likely to produce this, than to shew thee the intolerable Evil and Mischiefe of Sin, that thou may'st turn from it, and the infinite Goodness of God, that thou may'st be drawn to him. Both these the Cross of Christ most admirably holds forth; so that well might the Apostle call *Christ crucified, the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 23, 24. How it shews the Evil of Sin to bring us to loath and leave it, I have already shewn, and shall do more in two following particulars. That which I would now set thy Thoughts upon, is the inconceivable Love of God in giving Christ for us, and of Christ, in being willing to lay down his Life, *that as many as believe in him might not perish, but have Everlasting Life*. Consider seriously how the great God hath sent after thee a poor Worm; the God whom thou had'st sin'd against, makes thee offers of Peace; the God who needs thee not, yet appears desirous of thy Happiness; when he might have poured out Everlasting Wrath upon thee, he was willing to shew his Compassion. And see what he has done in order to thy recovery. He hath sent his own Son, *made of a Woman, made under the Law, and delivered him to Death for our Offences*, and accepted of the Satisfaction he hath made on the behalf of all, that shall by him come to that God from whom they are

fall'n ; and by his Death, not only Pardon of Sin, and Deliverance from Hell; but a Glorious Kingdom that shall never fade, is purchas'd for all true Believers. So that here,

1. *Thou seest plainly there is hope of Pardon and Acceptance upon thy hearty Sorrow for, and Resolution against Sin.* And whom would not this encourage to come in freely, acknowledging and protesting against their former Backslidings and Rebellions? If indeed thou wast past hope, it were as good to keep thy Sins whilst thou may'st, and make thy best of them. But this is not yet thy case; and if it hereafter should be, thou may'st thank thy own wilfulness. For Jesus Christ hath brought in a better hope: There is by him Liberty proclaim'd to the Captive, Freedom to all that are Bound, Ease and Rest to all that are Burdened, a Pardon to all that are Penitent. And what, will not this make thee stir? Is a Golden Scepter held forth, and wilt not thou lay hold of the Opportunity? Is God willing to put up all the Affronts he hath received from thee, if thou wilt now come and submit thy self; and will not this bring thee in? Is he ready to be reconciled, and art thou backward? What, dost thou rather hold off, because he doth so invite, and importune thee to him? Because he is pleased with so much Earnestness and Compassion to call thee off from Sin to himself; dost thou the more securely run on in Wickedness? Oh base Ingratitude, and meer Madness! Because there is hope of Pardon discovered by the Gospel, as procured by Christ, therefore, even therefore do wretched Sinners harden their Hearts, and embolden themselves to continue at a distance from God, as if it was a matter of nothing to get their Peace made with them, or as if he must of necessity pardon and save them, let them live as they list. Thus vilely do they pervert the very design of the Gospel. Whereas were they ingenuous and reasonable, they would acknowledge it to be a most forcible Motive and Engagement to cast away Sin, to hear that there was hopes of having Forgiveness and



and Favour from God. If a company of Subjects should rebel against their Prince, what course would be more effectual in all probability to reclaim them, than to assure Pardon to all that would throw down their Arms? But if they should be so base as to abuse the Mercy of their Prince, and think, because he was so compassionate, they might the safer persist in their Rebellion, it is but just they should be destroy'd. If thou love thy Soul, then beware how thou abusest the Grace of God. *Wilt thou put away from thee the evil of thy doings, wash thee and make thee clean,* and so with Humility and Submission fly to God for Mercy. If so, this Mercy through Christ, shall be assuredly thine. But otherwise, know there is not a word of Comfort for thee in the whole Gospel, nothing but what may strike thee with Terror. For remember well, that the Death of Christ gives all the encouragement in the World to *Repentance*, but not the least to *Sin*. Yea, it hath done more to destroy Sin, than all the Terrors and Threatnings of the Law. Well then, tho' thou art a lost Sinner, departed from God, once without hope, yet behold the God of Heaven and Earth takes pity on thee; he would not have thee utterly perish, though thou hast done so much to destroy thy self. He calls thee back to him, if thou wilt hearken and obey, and humble thy self before him for thy departure from him, and for all the dishonour done to his holy Name, and wilt now at length devote thy self to his Fear, thou need'st not doubt of his Favour. So then here's hopes of Mercy that may encourage all that heat it to Repentance.

2. And in the next place, *there is so much Love and Goodness manifested in that way, whereby this Mercy is procured and tendered,* that may serve to work upon the Hearts of all but flat Infidels, or brutish Sinners that will not be brought so much as once to consider of it, or seriously regard it. Here is Love that passeth the full comprehension of Men or Angels. Here are Mysteries and unfearchable Treasures of Goodness: Wherein could

God commend his Love more to the fall'n World, than in giving his Son to dye for us when we were without help? And what greater Love can be shewn, than that which Christ hath manifested in laying down his Life for his Friends? Nay, for Enemies, that they might be made Friends; for the ungodly, that he might reconcile them to God? Vile wretches that we are, no more to be affected with this amazing discovery of Divine Bounty. It's true indeed, there are many things we are yet ignorant of, which makes this Love the less apprehended in its due dimensions. Did we know more the infinite Majesty of God, and our Meanness compared to him, and how provoking a thing Sin is, and how contrary to his Nature; did we know more what strange condescension there was in God's *manifesting himself in Flesh*, what bitter things our Blessed Saviour endured for our sakes; did we know the greatness of that Misery he hath saved Believers from, and of the Glory he hath prepar'd for them? Did we clearly know these and all other heightning Circumstances, our admiration and astonishment would be unexpressible, as it will be when they are more fully reveal'd to us. But though at present we are much in the dark, yet so much of them we know, that would we duly ponder them, we should even amazed cry out, *Oh the depth of the riches of the Wisdom and Goodness of God!* And what, will not this prevail with thee, oh backsliding Sinner, to deal ingenuously and durifully with that God, who hath revealed such abundant Mercies to win thee to himself? When thou hadst undone thy self, and the Law, which thou hadst broke, had past his sentence upon thee; when thou mightest justly have expected the execution, behold, without thy seeking, a gracious Reprieve. And more than so, when thou mightest have had a Pursuivant speedily dispatch'd to hurry thee to deserved Torment, behold a Saviour interposing to prevent thy Ruin. Instead of an unchangeable Doom, behold an Act of Oblivion, assuring Pardon upon easie Conditions. Do but deliberately weigh these things

things with that seriousness which becomes a Man, and see if there be nothing in them that may persuade thee to a sound Repentance for Sin, and a speedy return to the God of Love. What dost thou think, if thou wast a mean Tenant, and hadst wilfully, in some discontented fit, pluckt down the House thou liv'st in, and so wast in danger to lye in the open Fields, and to be severely punish'd as thou hadst deserv'd ; what now, if after all this, thy Landlord, pitying the Misery thou hadst brought thy self to, should courteously come to thee, and offer to build up thy House again in a more sumptuous manner than ever, and set it at a lower Rent, only requiring thee to confess thy former Folly, and promise to be so guilty no more, but to live in this thy new built House, and do thy best to keep it in repair, and to accept of his help for what thou could'st not do thy self ; and suppose he should even impoverish his own Children through his Courtesie to thee, what dost thou think thou should'st now do in this case ? Is it an hard matter to determine ? Would'st thou not think he deserved to be taken for a mad Man that should stand justifying his former Offence, and would not thankfully accept these courteous offers ? I dare say, Reader, if this was thy case, thou art not so foolish or stubborn, but thou would'st quickly resolve what to do, and this Mercy and Bounty of thy Landlord would even win thy Heart for ever, and thou would'st think thou could'st never be sufficiently thankful for his Kindness, nor do enough to make him amends. And would indeed the Gentleness and Liberality of a Man, thy Fellow-creature, thus affect thee, and shall not the Loving-kindness of God, which hath appeared in Jesus Christ, have much more Power upon thee ? Dost thou not believe that our God hath done as much to engage his Creatures to himself as this comes to ? Hath not he shewn as much pity and tenderness to the Souls of Men, as that would be to the Body ? If thou doubt, look back upon the state of Man, and consider God's gracious dealings with him. Did not he



he by his own Folly and Disobedience cast himself out of Paradise, and by wilful Sin deface, and even destroy the Workmanship of God? And yet did not God take pity on us *in our Blood, when we were cast forth to the loathing of our Persons?* Did not he contrive the way for our Reconciliation to himself, and beseech us to accept of it? And do we not read, that in order to our *enriching*, the Son of God did as it were *impoverish* himself, and that *we might be fill'd with the fulness of God, empried himself, and became of no Reputation?* And what an Heart must that Prodigal Son have, who will not be affected with the Kindness of his Father, who takes care for, and seeks after him, when he had foolishly forsaken his Family, and done what he could to put himself out of his Father's care; and is courteously entreated to return back to that comfortable state and relation whence he had banish'd himself, and upon condition of his return, sees another better estate provided for him, instead of that he hath wasted; and finds his Arms open to embrace him, against whom he had lift up his hand? Methinks if thou believ'st that God hath shewn such Love to Man, it cannot but have some force upon thee, to bring thee back again to him from whom thou hast run away, and so long kept at a distance; and must needs prevail with thee to cast away with grief and shame whatever is displeasing to him, and doth estrange thee from him. And except thou be an unreasonable Infidel, thou canst not but believe it; for it is plainly revealed in God's Holy Word; where also we find the greatness of his Love inculcated, in God's having regard to us, and first looking after us, when we took no thought for our selves, how to get his Favour, 1 John 4. 10. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a Propitiation for our Sins.* Rom. 5. 6, 8. *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ dyed for the ungodly. God commendeth his Love towards us, in that whilst we were yet Sinners, Christ dyed for us.* And as Christ dyed to bring us to God, so the Consideration of

this

his Love should draw us to him. By this Mercy chiefly we are engaged to offer up our selves a living Sacrifice to God, which is our reasonable Service. Judge thy self, is it not most reasonable, that we should give up our selves to that God, who spared not his own Son, but deliver'd him up for us all, and with him freely gives all good things to his People? Canst thou then find in thine heart to go on in provoking so good a God, and in slighting such matchless Love? If thou canst, certainly thou hast banish'd all Gratitude, and hast scarce one spark of common Ingenuity left in thee; yea, thou hast put off thy Manhood, and art become little better than a senseless Bruit; for what should sooner work upon a reasonable Creature to love another, than extraordinary and undeserved Kindness which he hath received from him? Nay, I might go farther, and tell thee, and that justly too, the very Beasts themselves have more good Nature than such a stupid, unthankful Sinner as thou: For they have some sense of a good turn, and some love to those that do it; they know those that feed them and keep them, and use not to do them any Mischief. The Dog does not use to bite his Master, nor the Horse to kick at him that looks to him. And so indeed God himself complains of ungrateful Men, that when the Ox knows his owner, and the Ass his Masters crib, yet they do not know their Maker and Preserver. But to be short, let me tell thee plainly, if thou findest thy Heart nothing mov'd with all this Love that God hath revealed, in sending Christ to save us from the Wrath to come, by his own sharp Sufferings, I can no way see but that thy Case is full as bad, yea rather worse than his, who believes not a word of all I have said. Nay, how indeed can it be imagined that thou believest these things, if they make no impression upon thee? except thou never use to think of them after thou hast read or heard them: But there's the wonder, if thou dost believe them, how thou canst chuse but think on them, and think again, till at length they work some good effect upon thee. But if thou hast hitherto been so strangely careless,

less, let me once again desire thee now at length to set upon the sober Thoughts of this unconceivable Mercy manifested in the Gospel, that when thou hadst even destroy'd thy self, God should make hast to thy help; that he should send his own Son to undertake for thee, who was also willing to this Work, and should upon him punish thy Sins, and now after all, only calls thee to cast away thy Sin, and to return to his Love; which if thou wilt do, he is willing to be reconcil'd to thee. And see if there be not good cause that thou should'st hearken to these Invitations, and whether there can be given any just or tollerable Excuse for thy Disobedience. If the bitterest Enemy thou hadst in the World should but save thy Life when it was in his hands, much more if he should endanger himself, or undergo any loss for thy safety, I am confident this would soon take off thy spleen against him, and make thee very ready to be restored to his Friendship. And why the Goodness of God should not be as prevalent with thee I cannot imagine, if it be but soundly believed, and well thought on.

3. I may farther add, to engage thee to return to the Lord from whom thou art fallen, another Argument drawn also from the Goodness of God, shewn in the Death of Christ, as hereby it is most clearly discovered, *that there's some unspeakable Happiness which was purchas'd by the Lord Jesus for those that come to God by him*, and to which he invites empty miserable Creatures. Thou canst not imagine that God makes all this ado with Men for nothing. It was not upon any trivial Errand that he sent his Son into the World; nor are they any slight inconsiderable things which he offers to as many as will receive him. It's true, the Mercy had been rich and glorious, if Christ had only dyed to save us from Misery, and to have procured of God, that we might have been reduced to nothing, rather than to fry in Everlasting Burnings; and no Tongue can tell what a Priviledge the Damned in Hell would account this. But over and above, we read of a *Kingdom of Glory* which Christ will give to his followers.



lowers. And how great this is, judge by the Price that was paid for it ; not *Silver or Gold*, or any such *corruptible Trifles*, but the *precious Blood* of the *Son of God without Price*, whose utmost value cannot be express'd by Men or Angels ; and no more can the Glory hereby obtained. For if the Merchant be wise, the worth of his Jewel may be guess'd at by the Price that he paid for it. Precious is the Soul of Man, and full dear did the Redemption thereof cost, more than the whole World, or ten thousand such Worlds as this: And is not, think you, the Souls portion answerable to its own excellency ? And the purchased Possession answerable to the greatness of that Cost that was laid out for it ? When a common Slave may be freed for a few Shillings, half a Kingdom will be thought little enough to redeem a captive Prince ; and we afterward see there is as much difference betwixt them when they have got their Liberty ; the one sits on a Dunghil, the other on a Throne. For certain then, Christ Jesus came into the World, and laid down his Life to exalt those that hearken to him, to the highest Joy and Bliss of which the Nature of Man is capable, in delivering them from all Sin, rendring them exactly conformable to God, and placing them in a constant full Communion with him. He that so loved his Church that he gave himself for it, to sanctifie and cleanse it, by all this design'd to present it to himself a glorious Church. Upon this account therefore methinks thou should'st easily be perswaded to cast away Sin, which is thy Misery, and return to God, who is thy only Life and Happiness ; and that no mean Happiness, as I have told thee is evident, amongst many other Reasons, by the infinite Value of the Price that was given for it. Oh little do any, even the best and wisest on Earth, conceive what are the full Fruits of Christ's Blood ; what Miracles of Divine Love those are, which through endless Millions of Ages, will keep alive the Admiration, Joy and Praise, of Angels and Saints ; and fill the Mouths of Christ's Redeemed ones with continual Thankfulness, for that Wisdom and Mercy which contriv'd

triv'd and wrought their Delivery and Exaltation. So that you see, laying these things together, the Death of Christ, as discovering the Mercy of God, lays the greatest Engagement that can be upon the Sons of Men, to break off their Sins, and return to the Obedience and Love of God; in that there is so much Mercy procured and rendred as may beget Hope, and encourage to Repentance, which is not like to be rejected; and as there is so great Love exprest, as may well call for the return of Love, and even soften the most stony Heart; and as it discovers so great a Blessedness to be had in God through Christ, as may prevail with all that love themselves, to make out after it, and depart from Sin, which alone can keep them from it. And that's the second Consideration which the Death of Christ helps us to, in order to the working of a kindly Repentance; namely, the great Goodness of God hereby revealed to poor Sinners.

3. From all that hath been said, will more clearly appear the hainous nature of Sin, as a farther Motive to Repentance, *in that it is a contradiction to all this Love of God, and an undervaluing of the greatest Mercy that was ever bestow'd upon the World*; being in effect, a trampling under foot of the Blood of the Lord Jesus, whereby we should be sanctified. And hereby I mean those Sins which have been committed since Men heard of the Gospel. For as the Evil of Sin did appear in the greatness of those sufferings which Christ underwent to procure a Pardon, so these his sufferings do exceedingly aggravate their Sins, who have continued in them, after they have been told again and again what their Saviour hath done to make Satisfaction for them, if they would not undervalue and despise it. Oh how have you made a shift so often to hear and read of the Life and Death of Christ, and yet have done all that in you lyes to cross the End of his coming into the World, and to make his Death of none effect to you, whilst yet you pretend to believe that his Design was wholly for your Good? Oh unthankful Wretches, to make such a Requital for such unvaluable Love!

Love ! As if you studied how you might most dishonour and displease him, who thought not his own Life too dear to lay down for you. Could you see him upon the Cross wounded, torn, and bruised for your sakes, and could you think of no other Recompence but to give him fresh Wounds by your wilful Sins ? Did he once *despise the Shame, and endure the Cross* for you, and could you find in your hearts again to *put him to an open Shame*, and as it were *crucifie him afresh* ? Did he indeed deserve such dealing as this at your hands ? Berthink thy self, Reader, whether this hath not been thy case. Hast thou not liv'd in those Sins which Christ dyed to deliver thee from ? And what hast thou thereby done less than proclaim, *That* there is more to be got by thy Lusts than by thy Saviour, *that* it's better to remain in this polluted corrupt Estate, than to be wash'd in the Blood of Christ, *whereby our Consciences are purged from dead Works to serve the living God* ? And did they vilifie Christ more, that contemn'd him, jeer'd him, and put him to Death ? If thou take thy Fleahly Pleasures, and Worldly Profits, to be of greater Advantage than any thing that can accrue to thee from Christ's Death, dost thou not think as basely of him as any of his Crucifiers did ? And hadst thou been there with this frame of Heart, is it not most likely thou would'st have joined with them, whatever thou may'st now think ? As they hated Christ because he told them the Truth, and reprov'd them for Sin, and therefore did all they could to rid themselves of one, whose Preaching and Presence was such a burthen to them, so dost thou appear in effect an hater of Christ, his Life and Doctrine, whilst thou walkest so flatly contrary thereto. And what's this less than desiring that there was no God nor Christ to govern and judge thee, no such Rule as the Gospel to be thy Guide ? Nay, let me tell thee, thou who hast profess'd thy self a *Christian*, and yet hast behav'd thy self thus unworthily toward Christ, thou art herein more guilty than the *Jews* themselves ; for what they did was very much out of Ignorance, but thou after thou hast known he is  
the



the Son of God, and that he laid down his Life for our Sins, hast manifested all this contempt of him, and rejected him from being thy Saviour, whilst thou wouldst not be saved by him from thy reigning Lusts, which thou hast loved more than him, as *Judas* loved the Money for which he was hired to betray him. After thou hast known of that Friendship which by the Cross of Christ was shewn to the ruined World, yet thou hast been an enemy to this Cross, whilst thou hast made thy Belly thy God, and minded earthly things; whilst thou hast delightfully liv'd in the practice of any known Sin. What then, were the *Jews* prick'd to the Heart, when they were convinc'd that they had crucified that *Jesus*, whom God had made Lord and Christ? And shall it not have the same effect on thee, to consider thou hast been guilty in some sort of the same Wickedness, and hast shewn forth the very same Spirit that was in them? For think not thy self more blameless, because thou never saw'st Christ, nor hadst any hand in his Death, nor didst join with his Enemies in accusing, condemning and reproaching him, but cry'st against them as Monsters of Men, that persecuted the most spotless Innocence with such savage fierceness: for all this while thy Guilt may be as great as theirs, whilst thou hast as great an Enmity against the Image of Christ, and the Law of Christ, as they had against his Person. And that thou dost not wound him, and spit in his Face, is not from the Goodness of thy Nature, but because he is out of thy reach: for were he now before thee, and could it gratifie thy Lusts so to deal with him, it's much to be feared thou would'st not stick at it. Whilst the *Pharisees* condemned their Fore-fathers for the killing the Prophets, they followed them in the very same Sin. And suppose a Father had two Sons, the one at Man's Estate, the other an Infant, and the elder of these by following wicked courses should break his Father's Heart, and occasion his Death; and the younger when he grows up, should lead the very same Life that the other did, but yet should take on him very much to condemn his

Brother

Brother for being so disobedient and hard-hearted, as to  
 bring his Father to the Grave; is it not plain for all this,  
 that had he been in his Brothers stead he would have  
 done the same that he did; since he also takes those  
 courses which were so grievous to his Father? Thus it is  
 to be remembered that Sin was that which put Christ to  
 Death as well as the Jews. And this is it thou lovest, tho'  
 thou seemest to hate *them*. And as those Jews put his  
 Body to pain by their Cruelties, so dost thou grieve his  
 Spirit by thy Wickedness. And know, he takes it as pain-  
 fully from thee, that thou should'st thus displease him,  
 as he did from them that they should persecute him to  
 the Death. Nor art thou like to get a Pardon at any ex-  
 pier rates than they, even no other way, than *looking on*  
*him whom thou by thy Sins hast pierced, and bitterly mourn-*  
*ing* for this thy Bloodiness and Ingratitude. What say'st  
 thou then after all this? Canst thou without Tears and  
 Groans look back upon all the Disorders of thy Life,  
 whereby thou hast done all that in thee lay, to make those  
 Wounds of thy tender compassionate Saviour bleed a-  
 fresh, which he first received upon thy account? I be-  
 lieve thou thought'st not of this: no, if thou hadst, one  
 would think thou could'st never have done it. Thy de-  
 sign only was to please thy Flesh by all thy sensual courses;  
 thou wast only full of Projects to maintain and raise thy  
 self and thy Posterity by all thy Worldly Designs and Bu-  
 sineses, wherewith through thy whole Life thou hast been  
 so swallowed up. But thou seest how the case stands, that  
 his while thou hast been most vilely rejecting, and even  
 trampling upon the Lord Jesus, who would have brought  
 thee off from thy vain Conversation, from all thy Un-  
 godliness and Worldly Lusts, and hath followed thee  
 with his Word and Spirit to that end, and hath prest thee  
 with Arguments drawn from his matchless Love, disco-  
 vered by his Death, and hath besought thee to regard  
 him, yea, to take pity on thy self, but thou hast made  
 light of all, and hast gone as securely and quietly in the  
 ways of Sin, as if thou hadst never heard what Sin did

upon Christ. And what, art thou resolved to do so still? Shall nothing stop thee in thy career? Wilt thou not stay to hearken what a way it is thou walkest in, nor think what unvaluable Mercies thou all this while treadest under feet? Hast thou not yet sufficiently abused thy Redeemer's Love and Patience? Hast thou not made him wait long enough in vain? Wilt thou still make shew of deafness to all those Messages he sends thee? If so, yet be thou sure of this, thou shalt not be able to say at thy appearance before him, that thou never knew'st that Sin was such an evil thing, and so provoking to him; for beside all other Warnings that thou hast had, I now declare to thee who readest or hearest these words, that if thou still continuest in thy loose ungodly Life, living in swearing, cursing, drunkenness, whoredom, covetousness, cozening, malice, or any other known Sin, and wilfully neglectest thy Duty to God, going whole days without Prayer or reading God's Word, profaning the Lord's Day, neglecting Sacraments, if thou hold'st on this course, thou doest no better than *again crucifie and deny the Lord that brought thee*, and so hast no reason to complain if thou fall under the same Condemnation, which thou thy self wilt acknowledge, *Judas and Pilate*, and the rest of Christ's Enemies deserve; and therefore that thou may'st not be found amongst them, loaded with the same Guilt at Judgment, I do once again in the name of Christ beseech thee with all speed to change thy Heart and Life, and use all means appointed to that end, and after all thy wandrings, now at length return to him *the good Shepherd of Souls, who laid down his Life for his Sheep*.

4. Lastly, The Death of Christ may powerfully move thee to repent of, and forsake all Sin, as it holds forth this weighty, but sad Truth, *that all those who are despisers of his Death, and by living and dying in their Sins, reap no saving Benefit by it, shall in their own Persons undergo unsupportable Torments for this their unbelief, and wilful impenitence*. If thou believest the Gospel, thou canst not but acknowledge, that all Men had been in a most miserable



ferable Condition if Christ had not dyed; and thou wilt grant that Sin is a most perillous mischievous thing, and an unspeakable provocation to the most holy God, since nothing could please his Wrath but the Death of Christ, without whose Blood shew we had obtain'd no remission: And what then dost thou think is like to be thy case, if through thy own fault, thou art never the better for all Christ hath done, but must thy self answer for thy Sins, and bear the Punishment they have deserved? Let the Death of Christ, I say, instruct thee what thou art like to expect if this be thy Condition. *If, as he himself speaks, such things were done to the green Tree; what shall be done to the dry?* If he who was without the least stain of original or actual Sin, drank such a bitter Cup, when he stood in our stead, what will be the Portion of their Cup, who, being poor frail Creatures, must make Satisfaction for their own Sins? How will they ever hold up under the load of God's hottest Wrath, when he shall meet them in Judgment, and cause his Fury to rest upon them? And above all, thy impenitent, obstinate continuance in Sin, and Contempt of Christ, will lye heaviest upon thee in the day of Vengeance. These Sins against the Gospel, against Mercy, the greatest and freest Mercy, are most provoking to God, most inexcusable in themselves, and will therefore prove most pernicious to Sinners. Methinks then, if thou hadst any regard to thy self, to thy own ease and Comfort, this should make thee out of love with Sin, to consider how dear it's like to cost thee, how pleasant soever it may now seem. It was not for nothing that Christ felt so much Sorrow and Pain, as thou shalt know to thy everlasting Woe, if thou pluck the heavy Judgments of God on thy Head, by slighting him who would have kept them from off thee. Assure thy self, poor Sinner, as bold and confident as now thou art, thou wilt never be able to contest with that Wrath, which exercised even the Strength of Christ to bear it; thou art never like to go away lightly with that which he felt so heavy. For shame at length leave thy foolish

Plea, that God will be more merciful than to torment his Creatures : For hast thou not seen how he bruised his own Son, who never offended him, how he *bruised him*, I say, *for our Iniquities*, and will he then spare thee, who in thy own Person hast been a most stubborn hard-hearted Rebel, and hast cast away with loathing the Mercies that were again and again prest upon thee ? Thou hast no reason for such fond expectations. What, wilt thou tell Christ at Judgment, that thou didst not believe that ever God would be so severe, as to punish thee so dreadfully and everlastingly as his Word threatned ? And that therefore thou took'st somewhat more liberty in thy Life than he allowed thee ? Darest thou come with such a Plea as this ? But if thou should'st, what wilt thou answer to Christ, when he shall lay open what he underwent for thy sake, and how thou madest light of his Love ? Will not this soon silence thee ? If he ask thee whether thou hadst not evidence and proof enough of the Evil and Danger that was in Sin, by his suffering so much for others Transgressions, wilt thou have any Pretence left to justify thy self ? I may perhaps afterward urge this Consideration, but I mention it now as offered to us by the Sufferings of Christ, which do most plainly declare, that doleful are the Miseries prepared for those that get no good by him, but dye in their Sins ; which may bring all that are not in love with Damnation, out of love with that Sin which will at length plunge them into it. And thus you see how many Motives to true Repentance are afforded us from the serious Meditation on the Cross and Passion of Christ, as this discovers to us the hainous Nature of Sin ; and as there is such Mercy and Love hereby reveal'd, as may work upon, and reclaim all that are ingenuous, grateful, or wise for themselves ; and as this makes Sin more monstrously vile, which shall be committed against such Mercy ; and as it shews that all Men living in Sin, dying out of Christ, are like to undergo unsufferable Torments for their Obstinacy. And thus I have finish'd the second Qualification which

which is necessary to all worthy Communicants, to wit, True Repentance, an unfeigned sorrow for, a detestation of, and a turning from all wilful Sin in Heart and Life.

## C H A P. IV.

III. *A right remembering the great End of the Death of Christ to redeem us from all Iniquity, and sanctifie us. Of Faith and Covenanting with Christ.*

**I**T must needs be, that if we rightly remember the Death of Christ in the Sacrament, we must then remember to what End and Purpose this was; and this we shall plainly find in Scripture to be, that he might redeem Man from that sinful miserable State he was fall'n into, and restore him to a State of Holiness and Happiness in the Enjoyment of God from whom he was fall'n. So 1 Pet. 3. 18 *For Christ also hath suffered for Sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God*, Eph. 2. 16, 17, 18. Heb. 7. 25. And this is the meaning of all those Places which speak of the *Redemption* we have obtain'd by Christ, if we take it in its largest signification. And to this purpose he offers himself to Men to be their Redeemer, to confer upon them Pardon of their Sins, and give them victory over all their Corruptions, and the Temptations of *Satan*, and to lead them by his Spirit through this dangerous World, till he shall bring them with triumph into the *Kingdom of the Father*. Now hence it follows, *that no Man can remember Christ as he ought, who will not receive him to these ends and purposes for which he offers himself*, which is our effectual believing in him. For is he a fit Man to celebrate Christ's remembrance, who hath no Love for him, nor any liking to his undertaking, nor will be perswaded to comply therewith? And such are all they who reject him, and the tenders of his



Mercy, except they might have them in their own way, and that do flatly contradict his design in becoming our Mediator, by continuing still in their natural corrupt Estate, alienated from God, and liable to his Wrath; that is, who are Unbelievers. So that here I mean no more than, *That without Faith in Christ we cannot rightly remember him*, without we so believe that he is the only Saviour of Mankind, that we resolve, he, and none but he, shall be our Saviour, in the way that he himself thinks fit. But to make it yet plainer, how unfit all such rejecters of Christ are to come to this holy Supper, consider, that our receiving of the Sacrament is appointed to be on our part, as a token and sign of our making and renewing our Covenant with God in Christ, in which, if we be sincere, then it is a Seal on God's part, of his being in Covenant with us; a confirmation of our Belief, that he will be our God, and fulfil all his Promises to us; and herein he gives us an earnest and pledge of the future Blessings which we shall receive from him through his Son, as I shall shew under the next Head. Does it not then hence appear, that all those who will not be held in any such Covenant, are most unfit Persons to come to this Sacrament? The very design of our coming to which, is to shew that we are a People in Covenant with God: and by this solemn action, taking and eating the Bread, and drinking the Wine, we are to testify that we are so, and do hereby bind our selves so to remain. What would this be, but with much formality to mock that God who *will not be mocked*, and even to run upon our own Damnation, provoking the Lord to destroy those who so impudently take his Name in vain? By this practice Men are guilty of a down-right Lye, yea, of grossest Perjury; for Christ in effect saith, *All you, and you only that take me for your Lord and Saviour, come and partake of this Feast which I have appointed in remembrance of the Redemption I have wrought for you; and yet multitudes who will not take him for their Lord to rule over them, nor will be saved from their Sins by him, thrust in, and partake of*

this

this Supper. This is just as if a General of an Army, having a mind to single out some of his Soldiers for some design, should say, *All you that are willing to go along with me, hold up your hands,* and yet many should hold up their hands who refuse to go; what would this be but to be-fool themselves, and abuse their Leader? Or, as if at the first appointment of the Passover it had been commanded, that they, and they only should eat of the Paschal Lamb, who would go out of *Egypt* into *Canaan*, under the conduct of *Moses*; and yet many of the *Israelites* should prepare and eat it, either because they were hungry, or because they would do as the rest did, without ever thinking what was the meaning of this action, or what they hereby engag'd themselves to, being resolved still to continue in *Egypt*, neither caring for *Moses*, nor the *Canaan* he should lead them to. Thus when Christ commands, that all those who will depart out of the *Egyptian* Bondage they are in to Sin and Satan, and be guided by him through the Wilderness of this World, till they come to the Heavenly *Canaan*, that they should appear at a Feast which he hath made on purpose to entertain them, there throng in others to this Table who have no *Right to eat thereat*, as having no resolutions to leave their Sin, and thus to follow Christ, who would lead them to Glory. These are the Men that are found without their *wedding Garment*, whom the Master of the Feast will draw out from amongst the rest, and dispose of them to a place and company more suitable for them, as you may read *Mat. 22. 10, 11, 12, 13.* So that I hope you see that it's a most unsuitable and unlawful thing for any Man to address himself to this Ordinance, who is not heartily in Covenant with God, since herein he professeth himself to be so; and therefore if he be not, he will be found a Liar both to God and Man.

But since this is made by some the very Nature and Design of the Lord's Supper to be a Federal Rite, or an Action testifying and confirming a Covenant betwixt God and Man, as is the Eastern and other Countries

they were wont to ratifie their Leagues by feasting together; and as they who eat of the Sacrifices offered to Devils, thereby had fellowship with Devils, as the *Jews* by eating of their Sacrifices, held Communion with, and profest Subjection to God, as you may see them parallel'd, *1 Cor.* 10. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. Since, I say, this is on Man's part a sign of his being in Covenant with God, I shall somewhat fuller explain what this Covenant is, that you may understand whether you are cordially entered thereinto, and are willing to continue in it, that so you may know whether you are like to be entertained as worthy Guests at the Lord's Table, which is proper to his Covenant-people.

In a word then, the Covenant which we renew at the Lord's Supper, is the very same with that you were entered into by Baptism, when you were Baptized in the Name of (and thereby engaged to) the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and therefore obliged to those Duties which we owe to God in the several relations wherein he stands to us, which are denoted by the Persons of the Sacred Trinity: That is, we are hereby oblig'd to acknowledge God the Father to be our Creator and Preserver, and therefore to behave our selves as his Creatures ought, submitting our selves to his Commands and Providences, and placing our Happiness in pleasing him, and enjoying his Love; God the Son made Man, that is, Jesus Christ, we are hereby bound to take for our only Saviour, through whom alone we hope for the Pardon of our Offences, and for Ability to serve and please God; and for Acceptance and Happiness with him: And God the Holy Ghost we promise to take for our Sanctifier, to have our Souls by him renewed after the Image of God, and those Graces given into us, which were purchas'd for us by Christ, and the evidences of God's Love, and of our own Consciences; the Holy Word also which he inspir'd the Prophets and Apostles to write, we are hereby engag'd to take for the Rule of our Faith and Life. And this is your entering into Covenant with, and being



consecrated to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; which doth necessarily suppose and include our renouncing the Flesh, the World, and the Devil, which is in effect the same with Repentance for Sin, which I spoke to largely under the last Head : For he who is humbled for, and resolved to forsake Sin, doth hereby renounce his Flesh, which is pleas'd with Sin, and will not make carnal self his chief end ; and he also renounceth the World, which is the Fuel and Food of his Lusts, all that wherewith the carnal part is gratified, as matters of Pleasure, Profit, Honour, and the like, not regarding them as means to his Happiness ; and he renounceth the Devil, who by Temptations drawn from these worldly things, would entice him to Sin, and that wicked Nature also which does the office of a Tempter with him. All you then, who have been Baptized into the Christian Faith, are thereby bound to take God for your supream Governour and chief Happiness ; and Jesus Christ for your Mediator, and way to the Father ; and the Holy Spirit for your Sanctifier and Guide. And since you were Infants when you were thus first dedicated to God, it behoves you that are now come to the use of Reason, and are resolved by the Grace of God to be stedfast in this Holy Covenant, to come to the Lord's Table, and there profess these Resolutions, and by the receiving of this Sacrament in the presence of the Heart-searching God, and all your Fellow-Christians, to renew your Engagement, that you will take God for your God, and that you will be his People. Since then it is so plain, that they, and they only, are worthy Communicants, who have in Heart made this Covenant with God in Christ, which they are to profess, solemnize, and confirm, by eating and drinking the Sacramental Bread and Wine, it remains that all, who would not venture Damnation by doing this unworthily, ought to enter into a faithful Examination of themselves, whether indeed this be their condition and frame of Heart, or not. And let me beseech thee, Reader, faithfully to set upon this Work, as a Business  
of

of the greatest Concernment that ever thou hadst to do in thy Life ; namely, to see that thou art sincerely in Covenant with God through his Son ; for this is the very Heart and Substance of Religion, the Sum of all Christianity, and that upon which thy Everlasting Happiness wholly depends ; know but this once, and thou mayest know that Heaven will be thy Portion, should'st thou dye at this hour.

And here, that I may do what in me lies to help thee to the true knowledge of thy self, let me first advise thee to look carefully into thy own Heart, for that's thy surest way, if thou art but well acquainted with the workings thereof, and wilt deal impartially. And in this searching into the state and temper of thy Soul, I would wish thee to put these Questions to thy self which I shall ask thee, and to give in a true Answer.

I demand of thee then, what is that great Good on which thou hast placed thy highest Love ? The obtaining of which thou hast made the great Business of thy Life, and which if thou could'st but attain to, thou believest thou should'st be satisfied and made perfectly happy ? Canst thou say, and that truly, that God hath the utmost place in thy Heart, that his Authority sways thee most, and that, for the main, all things that concern thee are regarded but in order to him ? Dost thou make it thy principal study and trade to please him ? And dost thou count of nothing as fit to make thee a Portion but his everlasting Love ? If it be thus with thee, then thou mayest safely conclude that indeed thou hast made God thy chief end. But enquire diligently whether it be not quite otherwise, and whether thou hast not set up thy *self* in a distinction from God, becoming thy own Idol ? Art thou not possessed with high thoughts of thy *self* ? Loving and admiring thy *self*, separate from him who gave thee thy being ? It's true, the Man who is most heartily devoted to God, hath the greatest love and veneration of himself, but it is as he is God's Creature ; and it is his Soul which hath his highest esteem ; and he seeks his Happiness by  
sub.

subjecting himself to God, and therefore prefers, adores,  
 and admires God infinitely above himself, regarding him-  
 self in and for God, accounting it the end of his Being  
 to serve his Maker's Will, and desiring no other Felicity,  
 than the feeling of that Love of God which he manifests  
 to all such humble obedient ones. But the carnal Man,  
 though he may have some Reverence for God, and may  
 yield him some tribute of Service, some Prayers, some  
 Praises, and some Subjection, yet all this is but in order  
 to his *carnal self*, for the procuring for it such things as  
 cannot be had without God; so that God is regarded but  
 as a means to *self*, and with a respect hereto is all his  
 Service of God, for the manner and measures of it, fra-  
 med and limited. Thus may the covetous Man, whose  
 chief end is to enrich *himself*, pray to God for Riches,  
 praise him for Riches, be so far Just and Charitable as he  
 thinks may forward his Thriving; yea, he may be in all  
 things so far Religious as hinders not his chief end; but  
 let this once come in competition with any Duty to God,  
 so that by serving him he should impoverish himself, you  
 shall soon perceive what is his God, and what rules him  
 most, as you have an Example in the young Man that  
 came to Christ, *Mat. 19. 21, 22.* wherefore examine, I  
 say, whether thou art not a lover of thy self more than  
 God. Does not thy own Will and Fancy ordinarily guide  
 thee in thy Actions and Affairs; and is not that course  
 taken which most conduceth to the interest of thy Flesh?  
 Should'st thou not then account thy self well enough pro-  
 vided for, if thou wast but compleatly furnish'd with all  
 that in the World, which leads to the accomplishing and  
 gratifying of Man as he is an Inhabitant of the Earth?  
 And is not thy labour most for thy desire after thy de-  
 light in such things as tend to the pleasing and advancing  
 thy self in the World? Hast thou not been most taken up  
 in making Provisions for thy Flesh, thinking with thy  
 self, that to be happy was to live a merry Life, and take  
 thine Ease and Pleasure, or else to get more Money than  
 thy Neighbours, and to have more Respect and Esteem,

that



that wherever thou goest thou may'st be praised and admired? Hast thou not taken those for the happiest Men that have stood in thy way, and kept thee from the like? Reader, what saith thy Conscience to this? Do but hearken, and it will speak plain, and tell the truth. Sure thou canst not but know what thou makest the great end of thy Life, what it is for that thou desirest to stay in the World; what thou risest for every Morning, and for what thou goest into this Company, and that, and takest all thy Journeys, and wholly employest thy Hands and Head. All this is either for God, or for carnal self principally; for there cannot be two chief ends. And if thou art one that livest to, and idolizest thy self, for shame take not on thee to love God above all, as thou usest to do; for indeed thou dost not truly and properly take him to be God, not thy God.

Again, Let me ask thee, hast thou ever found in thy Soul powerful and prevalent Convictions, that thou hast no way to attain true Happiness, nor to escape Misery, but by the Lord Jesus Christ? And hast thou thereupon heartily consented to his Offers, and to the Conditions he hath appointed for the saving of thy Soul, being willing to be taught and govern'd by him, only hoping for Pardon of Sin, Grace and Glory to be given to thee by God through him, and for his sake? Put the Question to thine own Heart, didst thou ever yet see an absolute necessity of Christ, so that thou tookest thy self for an undone Creature without him? And hath thy Soul been kindly and thankfully affected with this amazing Mystery of Love, that God hath shewn to poor helpless Sinners through his Son? Hath it warmed and rejoiced thy Heart to consider it? Thus in some good measure will it be with thee, if thou art a true Believer in Christ. And this depends upon the former; for if thou hast taken the everlasting enjoyment of God for thy chief Happiness, thou wilt then be ready to comply with that way which leads to this end, and that's only shewed to us in and by Christ, who is himself the way to the Father, and none can  
come

come to God but by him. And when thou art once thoroughly perswaded of this, thou canst not but willingly resign thy self to him, consenting to be sav'd by him, on what terms, and in what way he shall appoint and prescribe to thee; and this firm and prevalent Consent of thy Soul is true and saving Faith, to which the Pardon of Sins and Everlasting Life is promised. This is *coming to Christ, receiving him*, and several other ways it's exprest in Scripture, but most commonly call'd our believing in him, which includes in it our trusting to him for all Mercy, our hearkning to his Teachings, and our resolutions seriously to obey his Commands, and imitate his Example. Examine thy self well then, whether thou hast such a sound Faith wrought in thee or not. Hast thou not rather contented thy self with a sluggish unfruitful belief, that Christ is the Saviour of the World, without minding thy own particular need which thou standest in of him, nor ever making enquiry what he would have thee do to be saved? Have not thine Eyes been so far blinded, that thou never yet sawest so much Evil in Sin as should make thee look out for a Deliverer, and prize him who hath done so much to redeem thee? But canst make shift well enough to live without Christ, so thou canst but get those things which now thou takest to be more useful for thee, in order to thy Happiness? Thus will it be with thee, if thou hast set thy Heart upon the pleasing and advancing of thy carnal self; thou art not then like to see any great need of Christ, or any excellency in him that should make him desirable: for he came not into the World to help carnal Wretches to the enjoyment of their Idols, but to turn their Hearts off them to the living and true God. And therefore as they who have chose this God for their Portion, do make it their great work to get an Interest in Christ the Mediator, and do live upon, and make use of him to bring them to their Portion, so they that have made the pleasing of their Flesh with any Worldly thing their ultimate end, they are diligent in the using of all means that may help on this

this their base end. The voluptuous brutish Sinners hunt after sensual Pleasures in their Meat and Drink, Wantonness, Sloth, excessive Sports, and merry jovial Company. The covetous Man, who hath a greedy insatiable Fancy to gratifie, wholly spends himself in treasuring up Wealth, and he tastes Sweetness in nothing but his Gains. His Bonds, and Bills, and Leases, are better things to him than the Covenant of Grace; and his Houses, and Lands, and Money, more precious than the Blood of Christ. And so the proud and ambitious, that would fain have much Esteem and Honour in the World, (which is the most natural Vice to almost every Man) they pursue their design, by labouring to get into Places, to make great Men their Friends, recommending themselves to the World, by their sumptuous Houses, great Retinues, rich Cloaths, genteel Deportment, and the like Braveries; others by their Strength, Beauty, Wit, Learning, and the like Accomplishments of Body or Mind. Thus you see, according to the nature of Mens Happiness, they make use of means to reach it. Search well therefore, whether some of these, or the like empty Trifles, have not been more set by, and laboured for, than Christ himself; if so, never say thou takest him for thy Mediator; for it is apparent, thou dost not make him so. No, but those things are indeed thy Mediators, which thou makest use of to accomplish thy selfish designs. And hereby thou dost in effect as much reject and vilifie Christ, as if thou didst revolt from him, and take *Mahomet* for thy Saviour. Oh beware of deceiving thy self in this point, which is so easie, so common, and dangerous, to talk of trusting and relying on Christ, whilst the Heart relies most upon some outward Enjoyment to bring it to the Happiness it seeks for, and the most they look for from Christ is, to have him keep them from Hell, after they have been all their days gratifying their Lusts, and serving the Devil, but they never think of improving him as a Mediator betwixt God and their Souls, expecting all their Mercies of this Life and the next, to come by him; and by him offering



offering up all their Services to God. Wherefore I beseech you to remember, that nothing will prove you sincerely in Covenant with Christ, as one of his living Members, but a thorow, stedfast willingness to be brought to Happiness by him in his own way, and let it be your care to examine whether you are thus heartily willing.

And then lastly, Hast thou submitted thy Soul to the powerful Workings of the Holy Ghost, to renew and regenerate thee? Hast thou faithfully render'd up thy self to him, to be transformed into the Divine Likeness, to have thy Corruptions purged away, and all saving Graces implanted in thee? It is the Office of the Holy Ghost to carry on Christ's Interest in the Souls of Men, to fulfil all the pleasure of his Goodness, and the work of Faith with Power, to bring them to the Father by the Son. No Man can cry *Abba Father*, and be filled with a Childlike Disposition and Nature, but he who hath received this Spirit of Adoption; and no Man can call *Jesus Lord*, and be heartily subject to him, but by the help of this Almighty Spirit. He shews Men the Vanity of the Creature, and the Goodness, the Fulness, and All-sufficiency of God, and enables the Heart firmly to cleave to him: He convinces Men of Sin, and shews them the odiousness and danger of it, and discovers to them a Saviour, by whom they may be redeemed from all their Iniquities, from the dominion, and from the condemnation of Sin: And he begets in the Soul a saving Faith, making Men not only willing, but earnestly desirous to accept of Christ to both these ends. Reflect upon thy self then, whether thou hast experienced any such Workings in thy Soul or not, whether thou art changed by this Divine Power into a new and heavenly Nature, and art hereby become *a new Creature, as all in Christ are, old things being done away*. Hast thou ever found the vigorous and warm movings of this Holy Spirit upon thy Heart, conveying Light and Life to thy dark Soul, *dead in Trespasses and Sins*? Hast thou carefully cherished these Motions, and complied with this sanctifying Work, which spreads it  
self

self through the whole Man? And art thou willing to be govern'd by him, to hearken to his Voice within thee, and to that Word which was inspired by him to be a Lamp to thy Feet? If these things be so, then indeed thou hast performed the Engagement that was laid upon thee, by being Baptized into the Name of the Holy Ghost. But call thy self to account, whether it hath been quite otherwise with thee. Dost thou not still remain in the carnal selfish State, alienated from the Life of God through a blind Mind, and a wicked stubborn Will, being still at enmity with him? Hast thou not quenched the Spirit, and stifled Convictions, and resisted his Operations upon thy Soul? Art thou not rather guided by the seducing Spirit, and thy own unmortified Lusts? Do not these still remain in Strength and Power, so that whatever they draw thee to, must be done, let the Word and Conscience say what they will? If it be thus, never boast of having God to be thy Maker, nor Christ thy Redeemer; for if thou art not sanctified by the Holy Ghost, God will never own thee for his, who accepts of none but an holy People.

Thus by looking carefully into your Hearts, you may discern whether you are truly in Covenant with God or not. And if this seem any matter of difficulty, to know what your Hearts are; or rather, lest you should pretend your Hearts are thus right, when it is no such thing, I shall give one Instance more, whereby you may know how you stand related to God, and that is by the consideration of your Lives and Conversations: for, if you are sincerely devoted to God in your Hearts, then you must needs shew it in the Holiness of your Lives, which is nothing else but the keeping of that Covenant which is made berwixt God and the Soul. If you do indeed *follow after Holiness*, it's a sign you account it your chief Happiness *to see God*. If you are patient and *unwearied in well doing*, it's a sign you seek for *Honour and Glory* with God. And if you keep the Commandments of Christ, *endeavouring to walk as he walk'd*, it's manifest that you

love

love him and believe in him. *If you bring forth much fruit; hereby you and all may know that you are Christ's Disciples; that you are living Branches of him, the true Vine; then have you received Christ, if you walk in him.* And if you shew forth the Fruits of the Spirit in your Lives, it's a true token that his Graces are sown in your Hearts. *If you are led by, and walk after the Spirit, then indeed the Spirit is with and in you, and you live in him, Gal. 5. 25.* But on the other hand, it's as certain thou art a Stranger and Alien from this Covenant I have before described, if thou be one that servest the Devil rather than the true God. Make what profession thou wilt to love God, and believe in Christ, if thou allowest thy self in any one known Sin, all thy great pretences will at length come to nothing. What, doth that man love the Lord, who doth not hate evil? Nay, who delights in that which the Lord abhors, and wherewith he is griev'd and provok'd to fury? Doth he take Christ for his Lord, who will not be obedient to him? Doth he take him for his Physician, who would not be healed, but had rather keep his Diseases? Beware, as thou lovest thy Soul, of that dangerous Mistake, that thy Belief in Christ may serve turn well enough for thy Salvation, without an holy Life; for if thou ledest not an holy Life, it's most certain thou dost not truly believe in Christ. For it is not enough to prove thee such a Believer as shall be saved, to trust in Christ's Merits, and hope God will be merciful to thee for his sake, but it is also of absolute necessity that thou believe in him as a Prophet, and King, and accept of him to teach and govern thee, if ever thou hope for any saving Benefit by him; and therefore thou must believe his Promises and Threatnings, and faithfully endeavour to yield an universal Obedience to his Commands, and to follow his footsteps: So that to say thou hast a good Faith in Christ whilst thou livest an ungodly Life, is as great a Contradiction, as to say, thou art faithful to thy Prince, whilst thou risest up in Arms against him; and so much as an Oath of Allegiance and Fidelity to their

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Severaigh doth-rye Men from Rebellion, so much doth Saving Faith bind them against Wickedness. And to talk of keeping thy Faith firm whilst thou livest in Disobedience to thy Lord, is as if a Wife should say, she was careful in keeping her Marriage-Covenant whilst she lived in open Adultery. Thus much here I was willing to speak of this, that thou may'st be the more plainly convinc'd, that if thou livest in, or lovest any Sin, and wilt not leave it, tho' God's Word and thy own Conscience condemn thee for it, that then thou art not sincerely in Covenant with God. Wherefore look well into thy Life, consider thy Ways how thou behavest thy self towards God and Man, and in all thy Carriage in the World. Art thou not a wilful neglecter of thy Duty to thy Maker, living without a sense or acknowledgment of him in all thy Ways, not so much as once in a Day, or perhaps in a whole Week, setting thy self seriously to pray to him in thy Family or Closet, not taking any pleasure in reading his Word, or in thinking and speaking of him to thy own and others advantage? Dost thou not profane the Lord's Day, and turn thy back with Contempt upon the Ordinances of God? Art thou not us'd to Swearing, Cursing, and taking the holy Name of God in vain in thy common Discourse? Or art thou guilty of Lying, Cozenage, Injustice in thy trading and dealing with Men, of Oppression and Unmercifulness to the Poor? Dost thou not live in Envy and Malice, allowing thy self in Railing, Backbiting and Slandering? Or, dost thou riotously abuse the good Creatures of God, eating and drinking to excess, unsuiting thy self for God's Service, and studying only to please thy Palate? Dost thou not pollute thy Soul with wanton Thoughts, Discourses and unclean Practices? Dost thou not mis-spence thy Time in Idleness and Vanity, carelessly wasting precious Hours that should be improved for God's Honour, by getting or doing Good? Dost thou not give way to thy Pride in thy Discourse, Carriage or Attire, lavishing Money and Time for the gratifying of this base Lust? Put such Questions as these

to thy Soul, and answer them impartially and truly. And if thou livest in any of these, or the like wilful Sins, be assured thou hast been false to the Covenant which thou was entered into in Baptism. But if thy Conscience can truly witness for thee, that thou *hatest every false way, hast a respect to all God's Commandments, earnestly desiring, and diligently endeavouring in all thy ways to approve thyself to the most righteous God, longing after nothing more than thou mayst walk unblameably before him,* then thou mayst safely conclude that thou art one of God's Covenant-people, and as such he will own thee, and to thee belong the Priviledges and Benefits of the Covenant, and therefore the Seals of it too; so that thou hast very good warrant to address thyself to this Sacrament, whereby all the Promises of God are confirm'd to his People, and whereby they profess the hearty rendering up of themselves to him.

By this time I hope thou seest what it is to be cordially in Covenant with God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which all are engaged to by Baptism, and which Covenant they renew at the Lord's Supper, namely, to love God above all, and to account his Love thy chiefest Happiness; to accept of Jesus Christ as thy only Saviour to bring thee to this Happiness; and to be willing to be sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and led by him in the ways of Holiness. Now, if thou findest thyself strange to all this, and didst never yet feel thy Soul brought under the Bond of this Covenant, my next work is to perswade thee to it, even to beseech thee deliberately and seriously, but yet speedily, to make a firm and everlasting Covenant with God to be his upon his own terms, to be absolutely devoted to him in Heart and Life, as thou hast in Baptism. Something I shall say to prevail with thee, if possible, for the performance of this weighty indispensable Duty. But by the way take notice, that all I am exhorting thee to may well be included in this one word, even *Believing in Jesus Christ*, which is that Qualification I am now upon, discovering the necessity of it in all

**Communicants.** And this I would have thee to observe, that thou may'st the better understand what I mean when I press thee to *Faith in Christ*, as making it all one with the Covenant now mentioned: For, as I have before intimated, he that truly believes in Christ, receives him in the Quality and Office of a Mediator, by him he is to attain to that Happiness which he offers to Men; and consents to be brought to it in that way which he thinks fit to direct. Now the Happiness he offers, is the enjoyment of God in Glory, and this he hath procured for Believers by his Satisfaction and Intercession, and fits them for it by his Spirit, which cures all their Distempers, and raiseth them to a perfect Love of God, and Likeness to him; and so makes them capable of full Communion with him, which is their Blessedness. So that to receive Christ as he offers himself to us (which is our Faith in him) not only signifies our dependance on his Merits for the Pardon of Sin, but also includes in it our Love to God above all, to whom we hope to be reconciled and brought nigh by Christ, and contains in it our resolution to submit to the working and guidance of the Holy Ghost, who purifies the Heart, and enables us to follow after Holiness, till we are brought to the sight and fruition of God. I shall attempt to make it as plain as may be, by an easie comparison. Suppose a King had banish'd a great Company of Subjects for rebelling against him, into a Foreign Country, where they stay so long that they have even forgot the Manners and Language of their own Nation, and are become wild and barbarous like the People they convers'd with, and after some time, this King, taking pity on his banish'd Subjects, should agree with his only Son, that if he would venture upon the Hazards and Troubles of so long a Journey, he should take a chief Officer along with him, and go to these Rebels, with Proclamation of Pardon to all such who should acknowledge their Crime, and were willing to return into their own Land, there to live in the Obedience and Favour of their Sovereign; and in order hereto, would come to  
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this Officer to be taught by him the Language of their Country, and how to behave themselves, so as they might please their King, and be fit to be in his Presence: When now the King's Son should come to these Men, and shew them his Commission, and perswade them to be ruled by him, who is come so tedious and dangerous a Journey to free them from the Miseries of Banishment, proposing the Terms on which he will deliver them, all those that believe he speaks true, and hath Power to help them, and being willing to be delivered upon his Conditions, do put their trust in him, by his means to be restored to the Favour of their Prince, and their former Habitations, they do by this very action manifest their Love to their native Country, and their willingness to live in Obedience to their King whom they had displeased; and do hereby also engage to accept of this Officer that accompanies the Prince to teach them the Language and Manners of the Country they are about to return to. The application of this to the matter in hand, is very easie: for in the same manner doth Faith in Christ, and our acceptance of him, imply our Love to God, and desire to live for ever in his Favour, which is that Christ offers us, and by his Death hath purchased for true Believers; and it implies also our willingness to be sanctified by his Spirit, that we may be made meet to live for ever in the Love of God.

Oh hearken then, and give ear, all you lost Sinners, (somewhat to pursue the former comparison) all you that are the Posterity of sinful *Adam*, who by his Transgression banish'd himself out of Paradise; you that are wandering up and down in this Wilderness, and have even forgot the Heavenly Country, as if you were made only to be Inhabitants of this lower World, here to live with the Beasts a miserable Life for a while, and hereafter to dye like Beasts that perish; and accordingly make it your own work to run, and ride, to labour and toil for such things as are needful for this present Life, without regarding that which is to come; whilst you are

thus estranged from God, forgetful of, and daily running farther and farther from him; behold a Message of glad Tidings and great Joy is dispatch'd to you from Heaven. The great God that made you, takes pity on you, and is even grieved to see what a Misery you have plunged your selves into, when he made you so happy. He is by no means pleased, that such noble Creatures, lately raised out of Nothing for such glorious Ends, should through their own Folly, and the Subtility of the Tempter, be debased into such a wretched sordid Slavery. Wherefore in pursuance of his gracious Designs for your Recovery, and to shew how his Bowels yern over you, he hath sent his own Son out of his Bosom, who is now with himself, to take our Nature upon him, and to become one with us, that he might be every way fit to be a Mediator betwixt God and us. That he might teach us by his Doctrine, encourage us by his Example, and make Attouement for us by his Death. Accordingly all this is done, the Son of God is come into the World, and hath abundantly evidenced his Commission from the Father, to treat with lost Mankind about their Reconciliation to him; for the procuring of which Reconciliation, he laid down his Life; and being risen again, he furnish'd his Ambassadors with Authority to assure all, that *Life was given to the World, and this Life was in the Son*; so that he who hath the Son, hath Life. And this is that Message which the Ministers of the Gospel at this day, and to the end of the World, are to proclaim to the Sons of Men. This, Sirs, is the joyful sound that is now in your Ears: If you will but trust your Souls with Christ, and consent that his Spirit should teach you the Language of *Canaan*, and work in you an Heavenly Nature and Disposition, suitable to the State and Place he would bring you to, then shall you be happy with God for ever. What say you then? Shall Christ be your Redeemer, to bring you to Glory upon these terms or not? What have you to object against him? Do you think he doth not mean as he speaks, or that he cannot do what he promiseth?

miseth? Dare you question his Power, his Willingness, or his Truth? If you will not believe his Words yet give credit to his Death Does not that tell you he is in good earnest with you, and fully bent upon the Redemption of Mankind? And beside the Miracles wrought by, and upon him, which fully witness for him, let his Resurrection put you out of doubt, that *him hath God the Father sealed* to this Office of a Mediator: By this assurance is given to all Men, that he is to be Judge of the World, and therefore that all are delivered into his Hands, to save or condemn, as he shall think fit: And he hath plainly declared, that *to those that receive him, he will give Power to become the Sons of God*; but as for those who reject him, upon them the Wrath of God abides for ever. But these things I shall branch out into two or three particular Considerations, to persuade you, if it may be, to accept of Christ the Prince of Peace, who comes with the tender of Peace to your Souls: to accept of him, I say, to wash you in his Blood, and sanctifie you by his Spirit, that at length he may present you without spot or blemish into the presence of his Father.

## CHAPTER V.

*Perswasions to accept of the Redeemer, and give up the Soul in Covenant to him.*

1. **A**ND first consider, *I am only perswading you to be Christians, which you profess your selves to be.* And will you not indeed be what you profess? Why do you embrace the Name, if you dislike the Thing? I know you have false measures, whereby you judge of Christianity, and think perhaps, that all who are Baptized, and keep their Church, and call themselves Christians, are so indeed: but you should rather say, such do profess themselves so to be, but they are not so in



God's account, except they are true to this Profession. He that wears a Nobleman's Livery, seems to be his Servant; but if he will not acknowledge him to be his Master, by doing what he commands him, you will scarce say such a one's his Servant; however, not a Servant to be maintain'd, but cashier'd and punish'd: And if you are but such kind of Christians, you will acknowledge it was as good you were open Infidels. Will you think it enough to prove a Man your Friend, that he calls you so, and gives you many good Words, and promiseth you great Matters, and in the mean time secretly does all he can to hurt and displease you? Even thus hath Christ decided the case, and told us who are his *Friends*, not they that only speak honourably of him, and pretend great esteem of him; no, but they who *do what he commands them*, John 15. 14. And if you will not do thus, and yet will needs please your selves with a conceit that you are Christians, notwithstanding, you may easily be convinc'd, that if your Christianity will not bring you to be list'd with the Friends of Christ, but leaves you amongst his Enemies, it's like to do you very little service. Wherefore he is only the true Christian who takes Christ in all those relations in which he is represented in the Gospel, and is willing to perform the Duties that these relations bind him to. And to such a receiving of Christ I am urging you. Can you be Christians without taking Christ for your Lord? And can you do this without you are willing to be governed by him? Is he a Disciple of Christ that will not learn of him, and that will not believe what he speaks to be Truth? To give an Instance or two, Christ bids you *learn of him to be meek and lowly*, and if you will not do thus, are you indeed any of his Disciples? He tells you, *his Yoke is easie, and his Burthen light*, and therefore requires you to take them on you; if now you think them hard and heavy, and therefore reject them, do you not in effect give him the lye? He tells you he is *the Author of Eternal Salvation to those that obey him*; and if you refuse Obedience to him,

him, and yet pretend you hope to be saved by him, can you count this believing in him? When he would redeem you from your Iniquities, and you will not part with them, do you take him for your Redeemer? So that its evident you are not really, and in God's account, Christians, except you are willing to be guided by Christ to Happiness in the way which he hath revealed; wherefore you must see to come up to this, or be reckoned as Heathens and Infidels, and accordingly dealt with; and chuse you whether, if indeed you find any difficulty in the choice.

2. Consider seriously *what a kind of design it is that Christ comes to you upon*, and see whether it be not most reasonable you should comply with him? He offers himself to be your Saviour, and what can you say why you should not close with this offer? Examine what hurt there is in that work of Christ upon your Souls, against which you are most prejudiced. He would take off your Affections from earthly things that cannot satisfy them, and set them on things above, which will prove a durable Portion. He would cure the blindness, brutishness and deadness of your Souls, and raise you to the greatest liberty and freedom of Mind, and to the most reasonable excellent Life, whereof you are capable. He would bring you out of Darkness into Light, from Pain and Grief to the most Manly Joys; he would deliver you out of the noise and tumult of your Lusts and Passions, and settle you in a sweet and steady *Peace*. Instead of being unserviceable to God and Man, and destroyers of your selves, he would make you fruitful and useful in your Generation, and your own truest Friends. I speak of the present effects of his operation upon your Souls, which would receive an unspeakable advancement, by being freed from the dominion of Sin and Satan, wherein Christ finds you. For certainly to be thus enslaved is the greatest Misery that can at present befall you, as it debases and defiles you, and puts you out of that order in the Creation which God placed you in. Nothing in all

the World can be so much disgrace to you as this; for of reasonable Creatures, you are hereby become like Brutes, yea, in some sense worse; and instead of the Image of God, you bear the Image of the Devil, through your love of Sin and enmity to Holiness. And do you think there is no hurt in all this? No, not in becoming Ideots and Fools, living contrary to, and below your Reason? not being like the Devil, whom you cry out upon, and pretend to abhor? Is it no dishonour to you to have him to be your Father whilst you do his Works? Well then, I hope you have nothing to say against Christ, who comes to recover you to your selves, to bring you into your right wits, to shew you your former Folly, and make you ashamed of, and humbled for it, that you may forsake it; whose design is to raise you to the priviledge and dignity of your Natures, by repairing God's Image upon you which you had lost, bringing you to love that which is best for you, to beware of what would hurt you, and be weaned from those things that will leave you, and cannot make you happy. And if you have nothing to object against all this, much less can you speak against his intention to keep you from Misery, and make you blessed for ever, if you will hearken to him, of which I shall speak by its self. Where then does the matter stick? What can hinder you from coming to Christ, who only calls you to him to take off your load, and lighten your burden, and to give you ease and rest?

3. Consider *what Christ hath undergone in order to the making of your Peace with God, on condition of your acceptance of him.* He became poor to make you rich; he became the Son of Man that you might be the Sons of God; he came down from Heaven to raise you thither; he entered into combat with the Devil that you might be enabled to conquer him. He bore the worst the World could do, and overcame all its assaults, that you by him might overcome the World. He drank the bitter Cup, the Dregs whereof you had otherwise been drinking eternally. When the Sword of Justice was ready to  
sheath



sheath it self in your Bowels, he came betwixt, and received it into his own. He willingly gave up himself to the Death, that bitter, cruel, shameful Death, that your Souls might live for ever. He bore your Sins, that they might not lye on you as an heavy load, to sink you into the lowest Hell. He was made a Curse, that you might escape it, and obtain a Blessing. And after all this that he hath done and suffered, shall he be rejected? Hath he done thus much in order to your deliverance, and shall all be lost as to you, as if it had never been done? What, hath the Son of God, *manifest in the Flesh*, shed his warmest Hearts blood to be as a Ballam for your wounded Souls, and are you not willing it should be applied? Methinks common Ingenuity should tell you that matchless Love as this should not be so slighted. If you were taken Captive by the *Turks*, and a near Friend should venture his own Life to free you thence, sure you would be willing to return with him, though you might have great offers to stay behind, if it was for nothing else but to gratifie your Friend, who had ventured so hardly for you, that you might not give him cause to repent of his labour. And what, shall the Blood of Christ be as it were spilt on the Ground, and have no effect on thee? How hard is that Rock whom this will not soften? I beseech thee, Reader, to think what Christ hath gone through to deliver thy Soul from the Jaws of Death, and then think whether it be just and reasonable that he should return without his Errand. I know I have mentioned this before, but I shall not stick to inculcate it again and again, that it may have some force, some power upon thy Heart. And to that end, before I leave this Head, let me intreat thee to imagine, that thou saw'st Christ Jesus now before thee all in Blood and Wounds, calling thee to him as he did *Thomas*, bidding him to thrust thy Hands into his Side, and put thy Fingers into the print of the Nails, and suppose thou heardest him saying to thee, *Look here Sinner, behold these Tokens of my Love, see what I have endured on thy behalf: Oh be not faithless, but believing;*

*lieving; be not perverse and obstinate, but willing to come to me, who have felt so much Pain to procure thy Ease, if thou dost not wilfully refuse it. Cast away those Sins which have used me thus; trust thy self with me, who have given such costly evidences of my desire to do thee good; accept me for thy Redeemer, who paid such a Price for thee; own me for thy Lord, who have thus brought thee out of Slavery; follow me in the way I shall shew thee, that I may bring thee safe in the Presence of the Father, whom I have reconciled to thee. Suppose, I say, thou should'st see Christ, even covered over with his own Blood, importuning thee thus to forsake thy Sins, and accept of his Grace and Mercy, what would'st thou say? What answer would'st thou give? Could'st thou find in thy Heart to contemn him, to stop thy Ears to his Requests, and go away without regarding him? Or would'st thou tell him he had not done enough to engage thee to him, and that thou saw'st no reason to hearken to his Offers, that thy Sins were more sweet and precious than Grace and Glory, and any thing he would give could possibly be? Surely thou dost not. And if not, then let not thy Heart and Practice return the same answer to me, who, in the name and stead of Christ, beseech thee, that thou wilt through him be reconciled to God. Even by all those Wounds which Christ suffered upon the Cross, by all those Pangs and Dolours which he felt in his Soul, by his Cries and Groans, by his Tears and Blood, I do, as upon my Knees, beseech thee to give an hearty entertainment to the Lord Jesus, who was thus bruised and wounded for thy sake. Oh let him in thee see the travel of his Soul, and be satisfied. No longer cherish those Lusts which resist his entrance; off with those Bars and Bolts that have lockt him out; down with those strong Holds that have stood out against him; let the Gates of thy Heart fly open, and let this King of Glory come in cheerfully, thankfully receive him, and absolutely render up thy self to him, to be disposed of as he shall think fit, only begging that thou may'st be taken into the number of his Redeemed ones, and be enabled*

to perform the Duties enjoined them, and be fitted to enjoy the Priviledges assured to them. This is that Faith in Christ which I would so fain perswade and beg thee to, and that by the Consideration of what thy Saviour hath endured upon this account, that through Faith in him thou mightest be pardoned and saved.

4. Consider, as what bitter things Christ underwent to purchase Salvation for thee, if thou reject him not, so, *what a most reasonable condition he hath appointed thee to perform*, that thou mightest obtain Salvation by him; even thy unfeigned willingness to accept him for thy Redeemer, and thankfully to receive the Benefits which he hath purchas'd for thee.

And will not this induce thee to enter into Covenant with him, when the terms thereof are so fair and gracious? This thy hearty Consent, that Christ shall perform the whole work of a Saviour to thee, and for thee, is the chief thing required to make thee one of his Members. This is the great Command of the Gospel, to believe in Jesus Christ. So that thou hast nothing to say on thy own behalf, if thou should'st be found at last to have neglected this Duty: For tell me, could'st thou have desired any thing more favourable? If thou hadst been enjoined some great thing, would'st thou not have done it? Much more now thou art only required to be willing to have Christ, and Life with him, and all shall be thine, wilt thou not be brought to this? But still remember the Offices of Christ must not be divided, nor his Benefits separated: He must be taken for thy Lord to rule in thy Heart, and govern thy Life, as well as for thy Saviour to keep thee from Misery; and thou must be as willing to feel in thy Soul the Power of his Cross, crucifying thy Lusts, as to have the Merit of his Cross procure thy Pardon; now thou must be brought to the Love of Heaven above Earth, if thou would'st be received thither by Christ when thou leavest the Earth. But yet in all this, it is but the Consent of thy Soul which is principally required, in order to the attainment of the



the offered Mercies. And would'st thou have Matters  
 brought down Tower yet? Would'st thou be saved a-  
 gainst thy Will, and hal'd to Heaven when thy Heart is  
 against it? Or would'st thou have such kind of Excep-  
 tions as these put in with the Conditions of thy Salva-  
 tion? That thou may'st have liberty to trample on Christ's  
 Blood; and yet be wash'd in it from the guilt of Sin; that  
 thou may'st have leave to serve the Devil; and yet receive  
 from Christ the wages he gives his faithful Servants; that  
 thou may'st be allowed to love Creatures more than God; and  
 yet that God should love thee with his dearest Love; that  
 thou may'st live without Grace; and yet when thou dyest be  
 received into Glory. Would'st thou indeed make such  
 terms as these, if it was left to thy own choice? Thou  
 could'st not fare so foolishly, so basely, so dishonestly. If  
 not, then come in and submit to these Conditions that  
 are now offered thee, than which thou canst not, if thou  
 beest well in thy wits, wish for any that should be more  
 suited to thy Ease and Interest. Hearken then to the  
 free and affectionate Invitations of Christ himself, To  
 every one that thirsteth, let him come to me and drink; and  
 whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely, Isa.  
 55. 1 John 7. 37. Rev. 22. 17. Give not Christ cause to  
 complain over thee, that thou would'st not come to him that  
 thou might'st have Life; that he would have gathered thee  
 as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings; but thou  
 would'st not? Oh what a cutting thought will this be in  
 Hell, to remember at what cheap rates thou mightest  
 have escaped that Misery, but would'st not! How easily,  
 how certainly thou mightest have been happy for ever,  
 but thou would'st not! The way was shewn thee, and thou  
 wast exhorted, and besought again and again to walk in  
 that way, but would'st not hearken. Christ would have  
 been thy Saviour as well as others, but thou would'st have  
 none of him, being in the number of those rebellious ones,  
 who would not that he should reign over them. And how  
 utterly inexcusable wilt thou be at the day of Accompts,  
 when it shall be asked thee, what reason thou hadst for  
 thy

thy not closing with Christ, when he offered to have saved thee? What answer canst thou then make, except this may go for an answer, then thou wast fully resolv'd against it? What though thou hadst not Wit or Learning to improve for Christ, nor an Estate to lay out for him, yet hadst thou not a Will to embrace him and his tenders? Could'st thou not have loved him, and have given up thy self to him? Could Men or Devils, or any thing but thy own wretched obstinacy and perverseness have hindred this? Thou who art now reading this, who hast heard the Gospel again and again, canst not pretend ignorance; for thou hast been many times informed, and once more let me assure thee, that if thou art willing, Christ is willing; yea, he is earnestly desirous of thy Happiness, and had rather thou would'st turn and live, than go on and dye; yea, he hath set himself full in the way to prevent thy Damnation, so that thou canst not go to Hell, but thou must tread him under thy feet, who stands betwixt to keep thee thence: If now at this very moment thou wilt comply with the design of Christ, to save thee in the way he hath established, he will surely perform all his Promises to thee. But beware of deceiving thy self, pretending thou art willing to have Christ, and that thy Heart is wholly set on him, whilst yet in thy Actions and Conversations thou art not subject to him; for the tenour of thy Life will be sure to follow the bent of thy Heart: If the Temptations of Satan do ordinarily prevail with thee against the Commands of Christ, doth not he possess thy Heart, who can thus put thee upon action? If thou followest thy Pleasures or Worldly Business to the neglect of God's Service, is it not plain that thou lovest the World and the Flesh more than God and Holiness? Canst thou be diligent to please those whom thou hatest, and to injure and provoke such as thou lovest best? These are too gross Pretences to pass for current, and thy own Conscience cannot be convinc'd of their Vaniry and Falshood. If thou consentest that Christ alone shall be thy Saviour,

thou

thou wilt depend upon him only for thy Salvation ; if thou art willing he should govern thee, thou wilt in the course of thy Life yield Obedience to him : If thou sayest thou hast not power to be willing, pritheee examine what this means, but that thou art absolutely unwilling, and then whose fault is that ? Who is it, I would fain know, hinders thee from being willing ? or whom dost thou think to lay the blame on ? Be assured the Holy God will clear himself if thou shouldst lay the cause of thy Damnation on him, as if he did not give thee Grace enough to change thy Heart ; since thou didst not improve that measure of Grace which was given thee, and didst by thy wilfulness keep out what was farther offered to thee : And thou wilt have small comfort in laying the fault on the Devil or thy wicked Companions ; thy Accusations of them will be far from acquitting thy self. They shall dearly answer for what they have done, but yet thou wilt still be left liable to Justice ; yea, thou wilt be found to belye the Devil himself, if thou say'st he was the chief cause of thy ruine ; for he could never have deceived and undone thee, if thou hadst not been willing to hearken to him, and be deluded by him. Nor could thy Companions have drawn thee to Sin, if thou hadst not first been in love with it ; for neither they, nor the Tempter, whole Instruments they were, could thus prevail with them whose Hearts were against it. Neither will it excuse thy rejection of Christ, to say thou never hadst sufficient reason given to draw thee to him, and that thou never heardest of any such Advantages to be had by him as might allure thee ; for thou shalt then be made to acknowledge, that in the thing it self there was reason, abundant reason, for thy acceptance of him. But if it did not prove sufficient to work upon thee, why was this ? Was the Gospel unreasonable, or wast not thou unreasonable in slighting it ? Was it hid from thee ? If so, was it not because thou didst permit the *God of this World to blind thy Mind*, and keep thee from the Knowledge of the Truth ? If thou art still in the dark,



is it not because thou *lovest Darknes more than Light*? Art thou not so fully bent upon the satisfaction of thy Lusts, that thou wilt hear of nothing that should draw thee from them? Art thou not slothful and negligent, and wilt not mind things, nor consider seriously of thy Sin or Danger, of the Love of Christ, and thy need of him, and the like Subjects; the Meditation whereof, through the Blessing of God, might have softened thy Heart, and bowed thy Will to a thorough compliance with the Lord Jesus. And dost thou indeed think that thy wilful affected Ignorance shall be held as a sufficient Plea for the neglect of thy Duty? If when thou ferrest thy Servant to work in thy Shop, he should shut up the Door and Windows to keep out the Sun, or by Night should purposely put out his Candle, and then pretend he could not see to do his Work, wouldst thou take this for a good Excuse? And dost not thou do thus, who wilt not hearken to, nor consider of the Word without thee, and puttest out the Light of thy Conscience, that *Candle of the Lord* within thee, whereby thou mightest be led to Christ, and then cryest thou canst not find the way to him? If a Prince should send a Proclamation to Rebels, promising Pardon to those that would come in, but threatening Destruction to such as should persist; if they stop their Ears when it is read to them, and will not enquire after the Contents of it, will it excuse them afterwards to say, they never heard any Invitations to lay down their Arms? Nor, farther canst thou truly say, that Christ required harder things of thee, than this willingness of Heart to be saved by him; for wast thou once brought to this, whatever else he requires from thee would appear easie. So far as thy Will is made conformable to his, there will appear no more difficulty in obeying his Commands, than an hungry Man finds in eating, or than a dutiful Child finds in pleasing a loving Father. To do his Will would then be thy great delight, thou wouldst find a new Nature within thee, carried forth with a mighty power and sweetness to all those acts of

Obedience that flow from a willing Soul. But yet farther for thy conviction. Suppose a Nobleman should offer to a Beggar, that if she would put off her Rags, and wash her self, and put on the Apparel he had provided, and leave her vagrant Life to come and dwell with him, and be his loving and faithful Wife, that then he would marry her, and instate her in all his Honour and Riches: Would'st thou say there was any thing required of this Woman besides her willingness to become his Wife? I hope, to throw away her Rags, and leave her wandering Companions, and live like a Person of Honour, does not look like the paying of a Portion, or doing difficult works. And this is the very case; poor and naked the Lord Jesus finds thee, only covered over with Rags and Filth; these he bids thee to strip off, to wash thee and make thee clean, and put away the evil of thy doings, to renounce thy Lusts, to forsake thy sinful Courtes and Companions; to put on the white Robes which he hath provided for thee, to be cloathed with his perfect Righteousness, that the Guilt of thy Sins may not appear; and to be adorned with the Graces of his Spirit, that thou mayest be lovely in the sight of God, having thus *put on Christ*; and he offers to espouse thee to himself, and become thy Husband and Head, and make thee a Jointure of Heaven it self, if thou wilt continue in Love and Faithfulness to him all thy days. Where then is the Dowry that must be given him? No, he asks for none, 'tis thy self he desires, and bids thee come boldly without Money or Price. What easier Terms, what fairer Offers would'st thou desire? Shall I then prevail with thee or not? Even as *Abraham* sent his Servant to seek a Wife for his Son *Isaac*, so do I now address my self to thee from my Lord and Master Jesus Christ, earnestly desiring *to espouse thee to him as a chaste Virgin*. With Commission from him I make these Tenders to thee: Behold this hour a Message of infinite Concernment and greatest Favour is sent to thee. Christ Jesus the King of Glory offers himself, with all he is and hath, to thee, and by me his Servant thy

Consent

Consent is now demanded. What Answer dost thou give me? Wilt thou be married to him or not? Wilt thou not give me that comfortable Answer that *Rebeckah* did to *Abraham's* Servant, *Gen. 24. 58. I will go with the Man.* Shall I make up the Match this day betwixt Christ and thy Soul? If thou sayest No, God that stands over thee will witness, thy own Conscience will witness, yea, these very Lines shall witness against thee, that Christ did freely offer himself and Salvation to thee, and thou didst perversly reject him. But God forbid thou should'st do thus foolishly; in the Bowels of Christ let me beseech thee not to turn the deaf Ear to this Message. Do not read these things slightly, as if they concerned thee not; but rather stay a while, and let thy Thoughts dwell upon the matter. If there be not all the reason in the world for what I urge thee to, slight it and spare not; but examine things well, and see thou contradict not thy own Reason, nor undo thy self by inconsiderateness. Once again then I ask thee, art thou willing to betroth thy self to Christ, forsaking other Lovers that have sued for thy Heart? Wilt thou promise to cleave to him at all times, and in all conditions, and through the assistance of Grace, to be faithful and constant in thy Love and Obedience to thy Lives end? If thou say Yea, and art sincere in this Resolution, then doubt not but it will be accepted and ratified in Heaven. What thou hast done this hour will be recorded by God himself, and remembered for ever. And do thou make haste to thy private Chamber, there more expressly and solemnly to profess this thy Engagement to Christ, and come to the Lord's Table, there to seal and confirm this Marriage-Covenant; and let it be thy care all thy days to continue steadfast therein, and then doubt not but Christ will perform his part to a tittle.

5. That I may be yet the more likely to bring thee to this saving Faith in Christ, which is nothing else but thy Consent to be married to him, to receive him for thy Lord and Saviour, as I have before explained it, let me



intreat thee to consider *the Advantages thou shalt hereby receive from him.* If thou ask me what these are, I may answer, they are so great that I cannot tell thee; they are such as thou must not, thou canst not fully know till thou art possesst of them. He that was perfectly acquainted with them all, might be to all Eternity in revealing them; for so long shall the true Christian be in enjoying them. But yet lest thou should'st think these were but only words to draw thee on and deceive thee, know, that I am able out of the Book of God to tell thee so much of thy Gains by Christ, in a line or two, as will certainly bring thee to him, if thou wilt be rul'd by the truest Reason, and perswaded to chuse what is best for thee. In one word then be assured thou shalt have all that may make thee truly happy in this World and the next for ever, *Psal. 84. 11. 1 Tim. 4. 8. Rom. 8. 28.* And what can thy Heart wish for more? That very day wherein thy Soul is throughly brought over to Christ, thou hast right by vertue of his rich Promise, to all that is in Heaven and Earth that may be for thy Good, and accordingly shalt enjoy it, as thou com'st to need it, and art made meer to receive it. So soon as by Faith thou art united to Christ, the Guilt of all former Sins is done away; and for the future thy Services shall be accepted, and thine Imperfections forgiven; for God is become thy reconciled Father, and will love, own, and bless thee as his Child. And canst thou want any thing who hast God to be thy Father, who owneth all things? Yea, who hast him to be thy Portion, who is better than all things? All his Attributes, his Wisdom, Power, Truth and Goodness, will be engaged on thy behalf, and employ'd for thee, his Works, his Word, and all Providences shall help forward thy Happiness. All thy outward affairs, thy Heavenly Father, who knows what thou hast need of, will see and regard; at all times he will so dispose of and provide for thee, as shall be most for thy advantage; no Affliction shall befall thee, but will prove as Physick for thy Soul; in all Estates and Conditions

he will be near to thee to direct and preserve thee, if thou retain thy Integrity, so that neither Men nor Devils shall prevail against thee to thy ruine. And the Holy Ghost will be thine to enlighten, sanctifie, guide, and comfort thee, to assist thee in Duties, and to seal thee up to Everlasting Happiness. When thou dyest the Lord Jesus will receive thy Spirit, and preserve thee from the roaring Lion, and the Pit of Destruction; and vouchsafe thee the beginning of Happiness with himself, which shall be compleated and perfected at the great Resurrection day, when thou shalt be raised up by his Power, and brought into appearance not in Wrath, but in Mercy, and shalt be publickly owned by that Christ, whose Person and Cause thou didst here embrace and own; and by him thou shalt be openly justified from all Accusations of Satan or the Law; and shalt be presented pure and holy into the presence of the Father, and shalt be eternally blessed in the enjoyment of all those treasures of infinite Love and Goodness, which God hath laid up in store for Believers. This is the Inheritance which we come to by Christ: we are made *Heirs of God, yea, Co-heirs with his own Son*; we enter upon the Joy of our Lord, with him we shall abide in the Mansions that are in our Father's House. Then at length we shall know all the designs of Divine Wisdom and Love, when they shall be accomplish'd in us and for us; and by the fruition we shall understand, what is that *exceeding and eternal weight of Glory*, for which there were made such wonderful Contrivances, such solemn Preparations, by that God who doth all things like himself, being infinitely wise and good. Then shall we reach to, and find those *glorious things that are spoken of the City of God*, yea, those things which it was neither lawful nor possible for Angels or Men to utter. To be short, thou shalt then be advanced to the utmost possible Perfection of thy Nature; thy Soul shall be fitted for those Actions and Employments which are most suitable to it, even the loving and praising thy Maker, Saviour, and Sanctifier; and

shalt be made capable of tasting the most ravishing, satisfying Sweetness and Joy in these Employments, in pleasing the blessed God, and in feeling thy self encompassed with the warm embraces of his dearest Love. And as this thy Blessedness shall be infinite and unspeakable, so shall the continuance of it be eternal. Nor shall thy Delight be once abated or interrupted through all this Eternity, but be ever exalted to the highest pitch; it shall always flow, yea overflow, but never ebb. This is the Joy that hath no end, no measures or decay. This is the Glory which Christ will give his Servants: *not as the World gives, gives he unto them.* This, he tells us, *is the Will of him that sent him, that every one that sees the Son, and believes on him may have Everlasting Life; John 6. 4.* The Water which he gives us to drink shall be, in those who partake of it, a *Well of Water springing up into Everlasting Life.* And some beginnings of this Divine Life now there are brought into the Soul, whilst it is made in its measure conformable to God, and is carried out after him with the strong workings of Love and Desire, and feels the shedding abroad of his Love in it self, and lives in the joyful Expectations of an advancement to the abundance of Life, the Perfection of Bliss which I before mentioned. And now Reader, if thou believest all this, which I think thou must needs, except thou take the Gospel to be a cheat; if then thou believest it to be true, I would know of thee, whether the Invitations Christ makes thee to come to him, be not back'd with sufficient Motives to prevail with all that are not quite beside their Wits in matters of the greatest moment.

By this time, I hope, thou seest that thy Redeemer seeks *thy* Interest, whilst he is so importunate with thee. What is all for in the result but this; That thou wouldst make thy self blessed for ever. This he commands thee, this he beseeches thee to do. And shall such Commands be disobey'd? Shall such Requests be denied? Good Lord! How strange a thing is this? That Man a reasonable Being, whose Wildom sets him above all other Creatures



Creatures on Earth, should be thus woo'd, thus call'd upon and intreated to be happy, and yet that he should stand dallying and deliberating whether he had best be so or not ; yea, that he should peremptorily refuse to be so. Which should I most admire in this case, the distraction and base Ingratitude of Man, or the inconceivable Mercy and Patience of God, so long to bear with such unworthy Creatures, and so frequently to renew the offers of Blessedness ; and even press it upon them ? Well then, do'st thou think there is any Gain in Godliness ? Is there enough to be had with Christ to make him and his Gifts worth the accepting ? For that I tell thee still is all that is expected from thee : Be but cordially willing to take him, and all his Benefits together, and for certain all shall be thine. Thou shalt find every Promise of the Book of God made good to thy Comfort ; yea, thou shalt find ten thousand times more than ever thou could'st understand or conceive from the fullest Promises, the highest Expressions that ever thou mett'st with concerning the Priviledges of Believers. Shall all that is said then bring thee to be one of that number or not ? Do'st thou know where to make a better Bargain for thy self ? If so, take thy own course, and make thy best on't ; for be assured, Jesus Christ needs not thee. His Glory doth not so depend on thy subjection to him, that it should be lessened in case of thy Disobedience. Do thou as thou wilt, he knows how to secure his own Interest ; but fain he would persuade thee to take pity on thy self, and save thy own Soul. If there be any in all the World that hath done more for thee than Christ, or that will do more, hearken to him and spare not. But before thou conclude there is any such Person or Thing, examine matters well on both sides ; and then do as thou see'st meet. Indeed the case is so plain, that the veriest Child or Fool almost may know how to decide it. Bethink thee well what thou art like to have from the World, from thy Lusts, from the Service of the Devil, or from any thing that would keep thee from Christ.

Canst thou think that the satisfying of thy Senses with what they call for, or pleasing thy Fancy with things superfluous, or living in Idleness and Wantonness, in Pride and Pomp with the applause of the World, is any or all of this better than the Love of God, better than the *Fulness of Joy* to be had in his *Presence*, or better than the *Rivers of Pleasure at his right hand for evermore*? But be they as good as they will, dost thou think they will always last? Or hath the Devil any future Reward for his Servants, when their miserable Slavery in this Life is ended? Amongst all his Temptations, did he ever so much as once bear thee in hand, that he would make thee happy for ever? Is it possible for thee to be ignorant, that the *Pleasures of Sin*, besides their emptiness and baseness, are but *for a season*? So that if thou remain without Christ, thou hast no whither to go, nothing to trust to, that will not miserably fail thy Expectations. Look round about thee, and see if thou canst find any other Foundation to build upon, to raise an Happiness to thy self. And when thou hast but considered a while, with that seriousness that befits one who hath a desire to do himself good, I doubt not but the Language of thy Soul will be like that of *Peter to Christ*, *John 6: 68. Lord, whither shall I go? Thou only hast the words of Eternal Life. Thou only hast revealed it, thou alone directest to it, thou only hast purchas'd it, thou only hast promised it, and thou alone canst bestow it, upon thy People: Wherefore to thee, Lord, I betake my self, renouncing all things that stand in competition with thee, be thou my Lord, let me be thy Servant; let me live to thee here, and let me live with thee for ever hereafter, partaking of that Glory which thou hast obtained of the Father for thy faithful ones.* What say'st thou? Does thy very Heart agree to these Words or not? Say yea, or no, before thou goest any farther. I am sure thou hast nothing like Reason to give, why it should not. Oh give not Christ cause to wonder at thy Obstinacy and Unbelief, who when he came to bring thy Salvation, was rejected.

jected. Once again, I assure thee, he comes not to undo thee. Think not thou shalt lose by him, because he calls thee to Mortification, Self-denial, and bearing the Cross. If he would take thee from any thing which is dear to thee, 'tis only because it is hurtful; and he'll give thee better Delights, more noble Employments than those he calls thee off from. Thou shalt part with nothing by his Service which thou could'st have kept long, and instead of it thou shalt receive a Treasure that shall never be taken from thee. But if thou art so fast bound to thy Profits, thy Pleasures, and thy sweet Sins, to which thou hast been long accustomed, that thou wilt not be perswaded to take thy Love off them, and set it on Christ, but art so swallowed up with them, that thou turnest the deaf Ear to all these Intreaties; if this be thy Resolution, that *Baal* shall be thy God, and him thou wilt worship; that the World shall be thy Portion, and to it thou wilt cleave; that Sin shall be thy Trade, and in it thou wilt live. Remember then thou hadst thy Choice; Christ rendered himself, and all his saving Mercies to thee, but thou didst deliberately prefer other Things before him, and therefore thou hast no wrong done thee if thou goest without him. If this be thy Thanks to him for his matchless condescension in inviting thee to Glory, grudge not if hereafter he exclude thee from it. And now get thee to thy Idols, which have so taken up thy Heart, that there was no room for Christ, except he would have the leavings of the World and Flesh, which, be it known to thee, he never will; he'll have the highest place or none; and since he must not have that, go thy way I say, and make the best of thy Idols, thy Riches, thy Bravery, thy Carnal Joys and empty Honours, thy dear Friends and pleasant Companions; suck all the sweetness they will yield, and keep them as long as thou canst; and when thou seest where they leave thee, and what thou hast brought thy self to, then let thy Conscience reflect, whether once thou hadst not an Offer worth the acceptance.

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6. But this brings me to the sixth and last Argument to prevail with thee to give up thy self to Christ, and that is, *the sad and doleful effects that are like to follow upon thy rejection of him.* If God do just and true, thou art not like to go smoothly away with the Guilt of this hainous Sin. Something to this purpose I mentioned before, and therefore shall be the briefer now, only in Faithfulness and Love to thy Immortal Soul, that thou mayest never be able to say but that thou hadst fair Warning given thee, I now come to tell thee, that if thou standest out against the Mercy that's so freely held forth to thee, refusing to receive thy Saviour on those terms, and to those purposes for which he demands acceptance, thou art then like to be as miserable, a forlorn, undone Creature, both Body and Soul, as ever trod upon the Earth, or saw the Sun. Make as light of these Threatnings as thou wilt, but if there be a God in Heaven, be assured they will be made good upon thee, as shortly thou wilt feel to thy everlasting Sorrow, if thy speedy Conversion do not prevent it. Think not I take any delight to dig in the bowels of Hell, and throw flames of Fire in thy Face, meerly to terrifie and daunt thee; no, but I would fain, if possible, prevent thy Misery, by discovering what it's like to be, if thou throw thy self headlong into it. And oh that I could speak any thing that might make some impression upon thee, not only to bring thee to a fright, and there leave thee, but a little to awake thee to a sense what a mischievous thing that Sin is, which now thou art so deeply in love with, that thou may'st see to get thy Hands rid of it, before it be too late to wish thou hadst done so! Even during this present Life, whilst thou art without Christ, thy Condition is most sad, however thou may'st applaud and bless thy self in thy Worldly Enjoyments. For thou art all this while under the Load of thy Original Sin, and all the Transgressions which thou hast actually committed in Thought, Word, or Deed, since thou camest into the World, the least of which, without pardoning

Mercy,

Mercy, would drown thee in Perdition. Thou hast no certainty for an hour of any of those Things which thou possessest, but art liable to as short Warning as the rich Fool in the Gospel, who was called away in *that night*, wherein he bid his *Soul take its ease, eat, drink, and be merry*. For thou canst not shew any true title, by virtue of a Promise from God, to the least of all thy Comforts: But thou standest always exposed to that Wrath which thou art *treasuring up for thy self against the day of Wrath*. Thou lyest wholly at his Mercy whom thou art daily provoking to Fury. In all thy ways which are so defiled, the holy God beholds thee in Anger, and even loaths thee for thy Filthiness. And he alone knows how short a while he is determined to wait on thee; thy Glas is running, his Patience is expiring, Death and Judgment are hastning, Hell is already burning, and thou canst not promise thy self a Moments safety. Whilst thou art sleeping or waking, eating or working, talking and laughing, the heavy Doom hangs over thy Head, and thou hast every day reason to expect the dreadful Vengeance of the Lord to seize upon thee; nothing but meer Mercy hath kept it off this while, which will not always last. At Night when thou goest to Bed, it's a great hazard but thou may'st awake in Flames, and never more see the comfortable Light; or when thou goest out of Doors, it's a question whether thou may'st not with *Judas*, go to thy own place, the Infernal Mansions, before thou returnest home. For ought I know, or thou either, this may be the last Book that ever thou may'st read; this may be the last Warning that ever thou may'st have. Think a little whether this be a comfortable Case for a Man to continue in, and what wise People they are that venture all upon a Repentance hereafter. Moreover in all the Troubles thou may'st meet with in the World, I know not what Support, what Comfort can be administred to thee; for there's none to be given thee from God, I am sure, whilst thou art a resolved Enemy to him. What shift thou makest

to get a little Ease and Relief at such a time I cannot but wonder ; only the remnants of thy carnal Comforts, and the hopes thou hast of seeing things better, it's like may help thee to some false Peace. But alas poor Man, *Death* will shortly arrest thee ; *Death* that will strip thee of all that thy Heart delighted and trusted in ; *Death* that will break the neck of all thy fond hopes, and utterly frustrate thy expectations ; *Death* that will carry thee out of this beloved World into a place to which thou hast been a meer Stranger, not thinking of it at all, or but coldly and seldom, or with horror and averseness ; this *Death*, I say, will shortly lay hold on thee, and then whither wilt thou look for Comfort, who art a Stranger to God and Jesus Christ ? Into whose hands wilt thou commend thy departing Soul, who wouldst not whilst thou wast living, resign thy self to the God who made thee, and bought thee with his Son's Blood ? Canst thou expect Christ should now receive thee, who wouldst not be perswaded to receive him ? What, receive a Rebel into the Kingdom of Peace ? A filthy Swine into the Communion of Saints ? No, never expect it. And if he will not receive thee, who must ? If Heaven may not hold thee, what place will ? Thou canst easily answer these Questions. And when by a Resurrection to condemnation, thou art made with all the rest to stand in the presence of thy Judge, how wilt thou then appear before him ? For the Lord's sake, yea, for thy own sake, poor Sinner, thou that canst not be brought to like Christ, nor his holy Laws and ways, nor the sanctifying Work of his holy Spirit, put these Questions as thou readest them, close to thy Heart. What wilt thou then say to Jesus Christ for this thy contempt and dislike of his Person and Government ? Darest thou then justify thy Unbelief and Impenitence, when he calls thee to answer for it ? Or who wilt thou get to plead for thee, when the only Advocate shall condemn thee ? Whom wilt thou make thy Friend, when he, who alone could, and would have been so, is, through thy own fault,



fault; become thy greatest Enemy? Dare Angels or Saints speak a word for him against whom their Lord shall speak? Or would they if they durst? No, they will approve his righteous Sentence. Will the Devil take thy part dost thou think? Hath he any Power there to secure his Fellows? Why it's he that is thy accuser, and if need be, would rather aggravate those Faults which he drew thee to. Wilt thou then hit him in the teeth with the large Promises he made thee, and call on him to make them good? Alas, he'll but laugh at thee, and scorn thee, and make thee acknowledge, that most justly are all they served, who would trust to the Devil's Delusions, rather than to God's Promises. Or dost thou expect relief from thy Companions in torment? Ah poor Creatures, they would rather help themselves if they could, but cannot; Oh then! with what an Heart, with what a Countenance wilt thou hear that last doleful Sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed!* when thou shalt look round about and see no help, no hope, but that down thou must lye in that burning Lake, *which the Breath of the Lord's Fury, like a stream of Brimstone, doth kindle,* what a posture will thy Soul be in; I can tremble to conceive it, easier than I can express it. And when thou hast lain some thousands of Years in that place of Torments, what then will the workings of thy Heart be; when thou hast felt that *Tribulation and Anguish which comes upon those that work evil,* what Thoughts wilt thou have of the ways that brought thee thither? What would'st thou not do for the least dram of hope in that miserable despairing State, for the least glimmering of Light in that gloomy Darkness? But there is none to be had, no, nor ever will through a whole Eternity; the force of which word *Eternity*, and the meaning of *Hell*, is now known and felt in another manner, than when careless Sinners could laugh at the mention of them, or sleep whilst they were preach'd on. But what, canst thou not perswade thy self that there are any such Torments prepared for Unbelievers? If not, it's to be fear-  
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ed thou art one of those Unbelievers for whom they are prepared : But if Scripture may convince thee, read amongst other places, *1 Theff. 1. 8, 9. Matth. 23. 46. John 3. 36.* and then tell me thy Judgment. Now indeed all this is but talk ; Hell's out of sight, and the most terrible words are but wind ; and therefore it is there is so little care in the World to make sure of his Favour, who can save them from this Misery, which, because it's neither seen nor felt, is slighted and forgotten. Should a King take a company of Men out of Prison, who had committed some Fault worthy of Death, and offer Pardon to those that would be sorry for their Crime, and promise never to be guilty of the like, but threaten Death to those that would not ; and withal shew them Pardons ready sealed, and great hopes of Money to be given to the Penitent, but Racks and Gibbets, and Fires ready kindled, for the execution of the Obstinate : Do you think this would not easily prevail with them, when they saw in good earnest what was like to betide them ? And if Christ would take this course, and shew Heaven and Hell, if that were possible, plainly to their Eye-sight, it's like the most stubborn Sinners would be awakened ; but he will not do thus, nor is there any reason he should. Since we are made Men to be ruled by Reason, why should he deal with us like Brutes that must be led by their Senses ? yet because he will not take this way with them, brutish Sinners disregard him, as if they needed him not. But ah Sirs ! all you that could see no need of Christ, when he was so urged and prest upon you, when shortly you shall see all the World stand before him, and shall behold the devouring Flames, into which all they must be cast, who have not a part in his Love ; then you will see what Benefit comes by Christ ; then you will no longer count them Fools that took it for their greatest Business to get an Interest in him. Then, if the most passionate Wishes that you had been so wise, would do you any good, if the loudest roarings, and bitterest cryes for Mercy might prevail,

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you would think them all well spent ; but alas, all will be to no purpose. Cry *Lord, Lord*, with never so much noise and earnestness, if thou wast here *a worker of Iniquity*, no other Answer shalt thou obtain, but, *Depart from me, I know thee not*. And thou thy self shalt be forced to acknowledge, that this Sentence is as just as terrible. For did'st thou not here bid Christ to *depart from thee, thou desired'st not the knowledge of his ways* ? And is it not just he should then command thee to *depart from him*, as one he will not know nor own ? Heaven thou did'st refuse, since it was to be had on no other Terms than Submission to Christ ; and therefore thou must needs fall into Hell, since there is no third place provided. But perhaps thou wilt flatter thy self with a conceit that none of these things shall come upon thee, in that, as thou pretendest, thou put'st thy whole trust in God that he'll save thee, and reliest upon thy Saviour Jesus Christ alone, to be kept by him from Hell, and the Power of the Devil. But beware, I beseech thee, how thou cheatest thy Soul into that Misery, whence no trick or wile can ever fetch thee. Do'st thou put thy trust in God he'll take thee to Heaven when thou dyest, who now allowest thy self in those very Sins for which he hath threatned to turn Men into Hell ? If indeed thou dost so, then I hope it is some Promise of his that thou bottomest thy trust upon, or else it is a vain confidence ; now shew me, if thou canst, one Promise in the whole Book of God, that gives thee the least ground to hope for Happiness, whilst thou continuest in an unregenerate natural Estate, in love with thy Sins ? Take thy Bible, and turn it over from one end to the other, and see if thou canst find any such place, but I could shew thee an hundred Texts, where Wrath is threatned to all unconverted Sinners, continuing such. So that in plain English, thy trust in God is no more than a wretched presumption, that he will be so merciful as to break his Word to save thee ; and if indeed this word prove false, then thy Confidence will not deceive thee ; but if it prove true,



as for certain it will, then woe be to thee, for all this pretended trust. And of the very same stamp is thy reliance on Christ, whilst thou rebellest against him. For tell me, prithee, does the Gospel say, *that every Man who shall believe that Christ will save him, shall be saved by him, let his Heart and Life be what it will.* I am sure neither Christ, nor his Apostles, ever made known such a Doctrine : And if thy Faith be grounded upon any other Gospel than Christ hath revealed, thou art like to go seek another Heaven than that he hath promised. For he hath told thee plainly, that *without Holiness thou shalt never see the Lord* ; that he is the *Author of Salvation*, only to those *that obey him* ; and that he takes off *Condemnation* from none but such *who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.* Now if thou dost truly believe in Christ, thou wilt set thy self to seek for Happiness in the way that he hath appointed, not in one of thy own devising ; for else it is a sign that thou dost not depend upon him for Salvation ; but on thy own fancy, or Satan's delusions, or whoever it is whose Directions thou followest rather than Christ's. If thou wast in a place where two ways meet, and one Man should bid thee follow him in this way, and another should bid thee follow him in the contrary way, if thou would'st come to thy journey's end ; is it not plain that thou believest him whom thou followest ? Or if thou hadst some dangerous Disease, and an able Physician should tell thee, that if thou would'st depend upon him, by the help of God he would recover thee, and should leave with thee such and such Physick to take ; if in the mean time thou should'st take a conceit, that thou mightest be well without following his Advice, and some one else should direct thee to an easier and cheaper way, whereupon thou throwest away his Medicines, dost thou then depend upon this Physician for a Cure ? Thus the Lord Jesus, the great Physician of Souls, assures thee, if thou wilt depend on, and trust thy self with him, or believe in him, he will keep thee from that Everlasting Death  
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whereof thou art in danger ; and to this purpose he sends his Word and Spirit to cure thee of thy Ignorance and Wickedness, which is the Disease of thy Soul, he would bring thee to Repentance, and thoroughly purifie and sanctifie thy Heart ; but thou think'st this a tedious course, and wilt by no means submit to it, come on it what will, but fanciest thou may'st be saved without so much ado, and that forsooth by relyance on Christ. Is not this a very wise business, to rely on the Physician for Health, and throw away the Physick that should procure it ? I know well enough what thou would'st have, Christ shall keep thee from Hell, but yet by all means he must give thee liberty to live in Sin ; that is, he must let thee *carry Fire in thy bosom*, but yet he must keep thee from being burnt ; he must let thee drink Poyson, but yet he must keep it from griping thy Bowels. But believe it, Christ came not into the World for any such ends. This he hath purchas'd, That no Sins, great or small, shall damn that Man that's truly humbled for, and forsakes them, and depends upon him for a Pardon, and is made holy in Heart and Life : But not, that he who lives and delights in Sin should escape Misery, which is indeed a kind of Impossibility. For Man is in Bondage, and Sin is his Fetters ; now the *Son would make us free*, he would set the Captive at liberty, but must he not then take off his Fetters ? We are polluted, Sin is our Filth, Christ is the Fountain opened for our cleansing : And can we be clean, if we will not be purged from our Filthiness ? We are Slaves to Satan through our Lusts, by which he leads us whither he will ; Christ would deliver us from this Slavery, but must he not then break these Chains ? Sin is the Spawn or Seed, Hell is the Fruit and Off-spring, and if the Seed be permitted to grow, must there not needs be the Fruit ? And this shews how Man plainly destroys himself, whilst he will hug Lusts, which are a Serpent in his Bosom, presuming, that for all that, they will not sting him.

Man by his Sins had deserved Everlasting Wrath,  
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Christ came to save him from Sin, and so from wrath; and if Men will not believe he came to this purpose, or will not improve him in order thereto, must they not needs *die in their Sins*, and so *abide under that wrath* which was before upon them, and which still follows after Sin, *John 8. 24.* and *3. 36.* *Acts 4. 12.* Ignorance of God is one part as well as cause, of Mans Unhappiness, and if Men wilfully close their Eyes, that the Light which Christ brings to the World can have no entrance, must they not of necessity remain in Darkness? Excessive Love to our Bodies, and to the Comforts of this Life which we shall be stript of, and want of Delight in God, and his holy Service, is the great Misery of a Soul, and doth engage it in those Strifes with its Maker, that cast them into an Hell upon Earth, and kindle the unquenchable Fire; and if they will not give way to the Spirit of Christ, to turn the Bent and Inclination of their Hearts from the World to God, do they not retain their own certain Misery? Thus thou seest how impossible it is, even in the thing it self, for all rejecters of Christ to escape Damnation, supposing they are but continued in being, and left to themselves; both which, Scripture assures us, will befall the impenitent in the future State. But know moreover, to the breaking of thy Heart in time, thy Condemnation is like to be much more heavy for thy rejecting of Christ, than it would have been, if he had never come into the World, or had never offered Mercy to thee. Canst thou in thy own Conscience think, that thou who hast been so importuned, and begg'd by so many Arguments, to accept of Christ, shalt escape as easily as they that never heard of him, or but very darkly? Shall not he that abuseth ten Talents be more severely dealt with, than he who hides but one? Why else does Christ denounce such Woes against *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, threatening them with worse Punishments than *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*? Was it not because they enjoy'd more Mercies and greater Means for Repentance? Do we not read *Heb. 12. 25.* that they *who refuse to hear the Son speaking*

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from Heaven, shall much less escape than they who refused to hear the Prophets of old? And of a sorer Punishment whereof they are worthy? Heb. 10. 29. Though I would not have thee neglect the Means whilst there is any hope, yet let me tell thee, it had been better for thee to have never heard one word of the way to Salvation by Jesus Christ, than having heard, to slight and disregard it. Every Sermon thou hast heard, every Book thou hast read, and every Exhortation thou hast had, and neglected, will sink thee so much the lower into Hell. These very Lines which thou art now reading, if they be not improved, will, without Repentance, be remembered to thy smart another day. Be thou well assured, though God be the Father of Mercies, and a God of Bowels, yet he takes account of the Mercies he affords his Creatures, and takes notice how they improve them; and if they be abused, they shall be severely reckoned for. God will not be mocked by rebellious Creatures, nor shall his precious Gifts be trod under feet, and they that do such things escape unpunished. Above all then, how will the Love of Christ in dying for them make their Doom more sad, if they be not constrained by this Love? What Torments can be great enough for the Ingratitude and Perverseness of such? If thou, Reader, be one of them, I dare appeal to thy self, whether thou deservest not, for thy Unbelief and Impenitency, greater Sufferings than if Christ had never dyed. For suppose there was a Traytor, who for his Treason being condemned to dye, the King's own Son should be content to have his Right Hand cut off, (to satisfy the Law, and terrifie the People from the like Guilt hereafter) that he might obtain a Pardon of his Father for this poor Man; and when he had got it, should come and tell him what he had done, assuring him, that if he will but take him for his Deliverer, relinquish all his traiterous Designs, and become a good Subject, he shall not only have a Pardon, but be taken into the Court, and there live in the greatest Favour and Honour: But suppose he, when he hath heard

all, instead of a thankful acceptance of his Pardon upon these Conditions, should kick at the Hand that offers it, and turn his Back upon him with Contempr, asking him, who wish'd him to trouble himself for him? Nay, worse than this; suppose, whilst the Prince is holding forth his Pardon, he should endeavour with a Knife that he had got to stab him to the Heart, would'st thou not think that such a Wretch deserved the greatest Tortures that could be devised? And more for this his latter Obstinacy than for his first Treason? And if thou be guilty of the very same, yea, worse Perfidiousness and Ingratitude against God thy Maker, and Jesus Christ thy Redeemer, will not thy own Conscience conclude it most Just, that the heaviest Judgments should be thy Portion? Wast thou not liable to Death, to all kind of Misery for thy Sin? Did not the Son of God humble himself to take on him thy Nature? and then to dye a most shameful cursed Death to purchase thy Pardon? and yet when he offers it upon condition of thy acceptance of him for thy Saviour, and becoming a faithful Subject to the Sovereign Majesty, thou art so far from being brought to this, that thou rather takest encouragement from this Mercy held forth by Christ in the Gospel, to continue in Disobedience to God, than which thou could'st not offer a greater Injury to thy Saviour, to make him as it were a Patron of thy Wickedness, doing far worse than they that crucified him, whilst thou indeavourest quite to pervert and take away the end of his Death, which was to *redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works*, Tit. 2. 14. And if indeed this be thy case, canst thou say one word in thy own excuse, why all the Plagues that are prepared for rebellious Sinners should not be poured out upon thee, who thus scorned and abused thy compassionate Saviour?

By this time, I hope, thou art convinced, that there is abundant Reason why thou shouldest accept of the Lord Jesus Christ, to bring thee to the Salvation he hath prepared for his People, in that way which he himself hath

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prescribed. That thou mightest not want Arguments of all sorts, I have plainly told thee what's like to come of thy obstinate refusal. And now after all I again demand of thee, whether thy Heart be brought thus thoroughly to consent, that Christ shall be thy Saviour, and take his own way with thee, to keep thee from Misery, and bring thee to true Blessedness? Art thou resolved to give up thy self to him, and follow his directions, or not? Shall all that hath been said, do nothing to incline thee thereto? Do'st thou think it better to be commanded to go from Christ hereafter, than to come to him at his command for Salvation here? Canst thou bear his heaviest Indignation rather than his *easy Yoke and light Burden*? Is there any thing in becoming Christ's faithful Servant worse than being the Devil's Everlasting Bond-slave? Berthink thy self whilst thou hast leisure, and cease not these Thoughts, till thou arrivest to a true Sense of the things that concern thee, and at length art firmly resolved, without any more bawling or dallying, to bind thy self over to Christ by a firm Covenant, to be wholly his, never to depart from him, but in all things sincerely to comply with him, and be guided by him, that thou may'st escape the Vengeance thy Sins hath exposed thee to, and obtain that Glory to which he will assuredly bring thee. This is that Covenant with Christ, or Faith in him, which I have been all this while perswading thee to; wherein I told thee is contained thy Covenant with God the Father, to love and honour him above all, as thy Maker, Ruler, and End; and with the Holy Ghost, to be sanctified and led by him. Which Covenant every Man must be cordially entred into, that he may be fit to partake of the Lord's Supper, whereby he does profess to consecrate himself to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that is, to be a true Christian, as by his Baptism he stands engaged. And this is the third qualification which is requisite to all Communicants. And if I should name no more, hence it may sufficiently appear who is fit to come to this Ordinance; even he that being acquainted with  
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the Doctrine of the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ, believes all that is there related to be true, and is sensible of, and deeply humbled for all his Sins, being stedfastly resolved, by God's Assistance, presently from this time forward to forsake them, and is unfeignedly willing to receive the Lord Jesus to be his Saviour, upon the Terms of the Gospel, that is (as I shall next speak particularly) he that relies upon him alone for the Pardon of his Sins, and is willing to be sanctified by his Holy Spirit, that he may be made fit for an Everlasting Communion with God, upon whom he hath placed his highest Love. This is the Man whom Christ will bid Welcome to his Table. Wherefore, Reader, if this be a description of the state of thy Soul, let not Satan, or thy own fearful misgiving Heart perswade thee, that thou art unfit to partake of the Priviledges held forth to Believers; but with a cheerful Boldness address thy self to this Feast, which thy gracious Lord hath appointed for thy refreshment and strengthening, till he take thee to himself into his Heavenly Kingdom.

Since I have already thus far discover'd, what kind of persons Communicants ought to be, from the nature of this Ordinance, as it is for a Remembrance of Christ and his Death, which cannot be without the knowledge of him, Repentance for Sin, and believing in him, I may therefore be briefer in the Particulars that follow, in shewing what more is concluded in Remembring Christ at the Sacrament, since they serve farther to illustrate and confirm what I have already mentioned concerning the Qualifications of the Receivers, and since I may repeat some of them in directing those that intend to Communicate.

C H A P.

## C H A P. VI.

IV. *A right remembrance the Benefits procured for us by the Death of Christ.* 1. *Justification.*

**H**E that remembers Christ's Death as he ought, cannot but remember what were the Benefits purchas'd by his Death for those that believe in him : which Benefits are held forth and represented in the Sacrament, and by it conveyed and assured to the worthy Receivers, and do call for suitable Dispositions and Affections in them, as I shall shew particularly. Of these Benefits I shall name three which are the principal, and contain all the rest : And these are *Justification*, *Sanctification*, and *Glorification*.

1. The first is *Justification*, or the *Pardon of Sin*, (for the difference betwixt them is so small, that I shall here take no notice of it) which Pardon Christ hath obtained by the Satisfaction he made to Divine Justice, by his perfect Obedience and grievous Sufferings, for the sake whereof, Believers are releas'd from the Rigour and Curse of the Law, received into the Favour of God, and preserved from those Miseries which otherwise had according to their desert befall'n them ; *Gal. 3. 1. Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us. Heb. 1. 3. When he had by himself purged our Sins, &c. Heb. 9. 26. — But now he hath appeared to put away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself. Rom. 3. 23, 24. For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God ; being justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ : With multitudes of the like places.* And the Bread and Wine set apart for the Sacrament, do represent Christ's Body that was given and broken for us, *Luke 22. 19. 1 Cor. 11. 24.* and his Blood which was shed to procure our Pardon, as you may read expressly, *Matth. 26. 27, 28. And he took the Cup,*  
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and gave Thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: For this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of Sins; that is, this Wine doth signifie and represent my Blood, in which the New Covenant betwixt God and Man is founded and establish'd, and by which Remission of Sins, and all other consequent Benefits of this New Testament or Covenant are purchas'd. And those Sacramental Actions of giving and receiving the Bread and Wine to eat and drink it, do hold forth and confirm the mutual Covenant betwixt God and Man. As it seals to the Covenant on Man's part, (that he will receive Christ as he is offered, and be devoted to him and to God by him) I have spoken to it under the foregoing Head; and to all who sincerely do thus, God hereby seals to them, that he will be their God, reconciled to them through his Son; and that Christ with all his Benefits shall be theirs; and therefore as one principal Benefit, that all their Iniquities for Christ's sake shall be forgiven them. Even as the Minister, who is here in God's stead, offers them the Bread and Wine, whereby a Crucified Christ, with the Blessings he purchas'd, are signified, so doth God make over all these to a believing Soul, which doth as really and truly, though in a spiritual manner, receive Jesus Christ, by consenting to take him for his Lord and Saviour, as with his Hand he takes, and with his Mouth eats and drinks the Bread and Wine. Now in answer to that particular Privilege, Pardon of Sin, which hereby is assured to us, there is required in us a *dependance upon Christ for this Pardon*, that is, an expectation and hope, that God for his Son's sake will pardon our Sins, that they shall not be charged upon us, to condemn us at the Great Judgment Day, but that we shall then be cleared from all Accusations, and secured from those Miseries into which the ungodly shall be sentenced; and this we are to look upon as sealed to us by the Sacrament. And it is to be considered, that this dependance upon Christ for a Pardon, is one part, or an effect of our saying Faith in him: for they  
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who believe that he is the Redeemer of the World, and are willing to be saved by him from their Wickedness, and so from Hell, they will rely on him to obtain Forgiveness by him, and according to the knowledge they have of their Repentance and Faith, the Conditions of this Mercy, they will the more confidently expect it. But as it is oftentimes difficult to bring the truest Believers to this act of Faith, in that measure as may give them Comfort, so it is more difficult to beat the most negligent out of this Refuge, who would cheat themselves with a conceit, that to hope for Mercy through Christ is all that's required of them. But know, the Pardon which God offers is upon condition of our willingness to accept of Christ to teach, and to sanctifie and save us, which I have oft mentioned, as that believing in Christ which the Gospel calls for, and enrolls Salvation upon; and then they in whom this willingness is wrought, are bound to believe, that all God's Promises made to such, as by his Grace they find themselves to be, shall be fulfill'd; and therefore particularly they ought to believe, that according to his Promise, he will *blot out all their Transgressions*, for his sake *who was bruised for them*; and upon the strength or weakness of this Perswasion doth their Comfort very much depend, tho' not their Safety so much, since the want of it commonly proceeds from an Ignorance of themselves, rather than an Unbelief of the Promises; to which I shall say something hereafter, lest any should think they must not come to the Sacrament, because they have not a confident Perswasion that their Sins shall be pardoned, and therefore think they have no Faith. Now from what hath been said, it farther appears, *That none but penitent Believers are worthy Receivers*; for to such, and none but such, doth God in the Covenant of Grace promise Pardon, and therefore to them only it is that he conveys and assures it by the Sacrament, which is a Seal of that Covenant, and ratifies no more than what that promiseth. And indeed none but such do in good earnest desire or seek

seek after a Pardon ; for none but they are soundly convinced of their need of it, by reason of their breach of that Law which doth accuse and condemn them. Ignorant senseless Sinners, that run on desperately in their wicked courses, without any thought or fear of those Judgments that are ready to be executed upon them, and never take to Heart how they have incensed the Divine Majesty against them, do not use much to busie their Thoughts how they should turn away this Wrath, and prevent this Misery. The fear of Sicknes, Poverty, Disgrace, or the like Temporal Evils, doth much more take them up than the fears of Hell, and accordingly their daily Care is to avoid those rather than this. He that is sick prizes the Physician, whilst he that is in Health, or thinks he is so, cares little for him, or his Medicines. A poor Prisoner that hath newly heard the Sentence of Condemnation from the Judges Mouth, and knows he's a dead Man in Law, what would not he do to get a Pardon from the King ? Or oh how thankful would he be to the Man that should do it for him ! whilst another that knows not himself to be guilty (tho' he may be really so) would take himself little beholden to any one that should make him such an Offer, to wit, of the King's Pardon. Even thus should you come to a stupid Sinner, and be able to assure him that God was reconciled to him, he would be very little moved with the Tidings, for this is not a matter whereof he used to make much doubt, or greatly concern himself one way or other ; but could you surprize him with the News of a great Estate befallen to him, oh what an Extravagance of Joy would you cast the poor Man into ! I confess when these careless ones come to be awakened on a Death-bed, or by a Fit of Sicknes, then they do indeed earnestly desire, that their Sins may be forgiven them. Notwithstanding the great Affection they had to the Devil's Drudgery, they have no mind to receive the Wages which he affords them. Though they have loved Sin so well, that they would never part with it whilst they could

could keep it; yet since now they can keep it no longer, by no means are they willing to go to that Hell to which their Sins directly led them. Loth they are to take leave of their Lusts, till they come to the very mouth of the Grave, but then fain they would rid their hands of them; for they know, if they go together one step farther they are like to rue it for ever. Whilst they could taste the Pleasures of Sin they wallowed securely in it, but now Sickness hath spoiled their Taste, and put them out of Temper, they seem somewhat more indifferent to it; but especially fearing lest they have already had all the Sweetness, and that nothing but bitter Dregs are at the bottom of the Cup, therefore now at length they would throw it out of their hand. And this I fear is ordinarily the best of a Death-bed Repentance, which many build their hopes so much upon. They may be in good earnest afraid of being damned, and therefore are sorry that they have brought themselves into such Danger: But what's this to an ingenuous Sorrow for having offended a good and gracious God, and to a loathing of Sin for its own vileness? which are necessary to make our Repentance right. And not only at Death, its like, but in time of Health also, there are many who would be very willing to have their Sins pardoned, if it might be, upon any other Condition than forsaking them. If bare Confession and begging of Mercy might serve turn, or if coming to the Sacrament might serve turn, and yet still they might live as they list, few would go without a Pardon. But remember, God no where assures Pardon to any Man absolutely, but upon a certain Condition, which except we perform, we cannot look for the promised Mercy. What this condition is, I have before told you, even that you should repent of, and give diligence to forsake all Sin, and receive Christ to be your perfect Saviour: Upon no other Terms therefore expect to have Pardon confirmed to you by the Sacrament, which will no farther avail you than as it receives Power and Efficacy from the Promise, without which it is a Seal to a  
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blank Paper that will warrant you to claim nothing. Suppose a Landlord should make you a Lease of an House, upon Condition that you would own your self his Tenant, and yearly pay him some small Quit-rent, and should set his Seal to this Lease, all this would stand you in no stead, if you denied that you was his Tenant, and refuse to pay the Rent he required. Wherefore to know whether your hope of Pardon be upon good Grounds, and such as will not fail you, examine whether you are such kind of Persons as I have before described, whether you are humbled for, and brought out of love with every Sin, and to firm purpose of Heart cleave to the Lord Jesus.

To bring you thus to depend upon Christ for a Pardon, in a right manner, and upon sure grounds, the Considerations I laid down under the last particular may be of use, since this is one part of that Faith in Christ, which I there exhorted you to; that was an acceptance of him in all his Offices; this hath a peculiar respect to his Priestly Office, and is called *Faith in his Blood*, Rom. 3. 25. Only to add a word or two more, for the quickning of all such who have not much laid it to Heart, how to get their Sins pardoned, as if they thought it was a thing of no great consequence: Consider, I beseech you, whether the Incarnation, Life and Death of Christ was not a matter of huge importance to the World; and tell me, Reader, dost not think thou art as much concern'd herein as any other Man? Had'st not thou as much need of his Death as any? And therefore doth it not stand thee upon, to see whether thou sharest in the Benefits of it as much as it doth any Man breathing? And tell me farther, if all this Preparation in the Gospel hath been made for thee only, and Christ hath come down from Heaven, and suffered on the Cross for thy sake alone, that thou mightest be saved by him on the same Terms that now thou may'st; and should have sent thee a Message, calling thee by thy particular name, assuring thee of all this, and beseeching thee to accept of these Offers of Life:

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Dost thou think all this would have convinced thee of the greatness of Divine Love, and of thy need of Mercy? And would it have awakened thee to make out after the same, and to do all that was required to obtain it? If so, why then wilt thou not be perswaded to the same care? Since the Gospel speaks to thee as particularly as if it named thee; and the Mercy is as great, and thy need of it as much as if thou alone wast concerned in it; and thou shalt never have the less Benefit, nay, rather more, by having others to share with thee in it; but thy Misery, if thou miss of a Pardon, will be never the less, for having many Companions in the same sad case with thy self.

Once again let me ask thee, thou who now art so insensible of thy need of a Pardon, that thou wilt not take pains to get it in the way thou art commanded, wouldst thou be contented on any rates, absolutely and expressly to part with all Hopes and Expectations of it? If thou might'st be hired with a thousand or ten thousand Pounds, would'st thou for such a sum of Money, profess thou didst renounce all Right and Title to Jesus Christ, and all hopes of Mercy through him? Or would'st thou give this under thy Hand in Writing to the Devil, or to any Man that would help thee to a great Estate? What would'st thou think of those who should do thus? Would'st thou not look upon them as most wretched forlorn Creatures? Why, be it known to thee, if through Negligence and Stupidity thou seek not out after an Interest in Christ, that thou may'st be pardoned and saved by him, thy Condition will at length be found as miserable as theirs. If there should be certain Acres of ground in *Ireland*, promised to any one that would go thither to possess them, he that would not take the Pains to go over, would have no more Advantage by them, than he that should formally renounce his Right thereto: Even so by Carelessness and Sloth may'st thou lose all Benefit by Christ, as certainly as those poor Creatures that are drawn to make Compacts with the Devil, and sell away their Souls for a Thing of nought. To

To conclude, If nothing I have hitherto said will move thee, consider, I entreat thee, whether this thy undervaluing of pardoning Mercy will remain always. Sins thou hast, I know thou wilt acknowledge, yea, many and great Sins, such as would sink thee to the lowest Hell if they be laid to thy charge. Do'st thou not grant this? And thou canst not but know, that there will at length come a Day of Reckoning for these thy Sins: And dost thou think when thou must stand before the Judge, and give up thy Account, that thou shalt not earnestly desire a Pardon then? Will it then seem as indifferent a Thing as now it does? Then, I say, when without it thou must be sentenced to keep company with the Devils in the midst of scorching Flames for ever and ever? And thou canst not sure be so ignorant as not to know, that none shall have a Pardon *then* but those who got it *now*: That's a Day for examining, and declaring what our Estates are, whether good or bad, that we may be dealt with accordingly; not a time for getting them made better, if they were naught before. Wherefore if thou beest not a very Brute, only to mind what is before thee; if thou hadst any foresight, any belief of this Judgment-day that thou art going to, thou would'st now rouse up thy self, and with all speed and industry labour to get that Pardon, which within a while, to thy own most lively sense, will be so needful, and stand thee in so much stead. And when thou art wrought to such a sight of thy Misery as makes thee desire after Mercy, and to such a loathing of thy Sins as fits thee for it, then thou may'st be assured, that God for Christ's sake will be gracious to thee, and thou may'st comfortably address thy self to the Sacrament, and take it as a farther Assurance from God, that his Promises of Mercy shall be made good to thee.



## C H A P. VII.

*The second Benefit is Sanctification.*

2. **T**HE second great benefit purchas'd by the Death of Christ, and held forth in the Sacrament, is *Sanctifying, Saving Grace*, for the enlivening and strengthening the Souls of Believers. There is no Truth more plain in the whole Gospel, than that one great end of Christ's Death was, to obtain from the Father, that the Holy Spirit should accompany the proclaiming of the Gospel, to enlighten the Minds, and soften the Hearts of those who should not wilfully resist his Workings, that they might entertain the *Truth in the love thereof*; and that on these, greater measures of Grace should be poured forth, to make them in all things conformable to their Maker, according to the capacity of their Natures; which was the great Design of the Redeemer, even to restore Apostate Creatures to the Image of God wherein they were created, that so they might be made meet for his Service here, and the Fruition of him hereafter. A most lamentable Mistake it is to confine Christ's Death only to the procuring of a Pardon, and keeping Sinners out of Hell, since this was but in order to a work of Grace on their Hearts, and only such who submit to this Work shall at last have a share in the absolute Pardon. For suppose a company of Prisoners were taken in War, who being weak and wounded, cannot return into their own Country, but must presently be put to death by the King that took them; and in the mean Time comes their own Prince, and pays a great sum to obtain, that the execution of them may be put off for some Time, and that his Physician may use Medicines, and apply Plaisters to as many as are willing, and that all such, when they are made whole, shall be sent to their own homes; and the rest who will not be ruled by the Physician, but spit out  
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his Potions, because they are bitter, and throw away his Plaisters, because they make them smart, they are to remain in their Prison, and be put to death as they were sentenced. Here we see the Ransom that was paid, was first to stop the slaughter of the Prisoners, and to get liberty to use means for their recovery to Health and Soundness; and secondly to obtain, that the recovered should be set free to return to their own Country; and not only the Contempt of the Ransom, but of the Physician, would bring Death. Thus had we by the Fall, both brought our selves into Danger of present Destruction, and disabled our Souls, that we could not return to that state whence we fell; but the Son of God undertaking our Redemption, obtained for us, that the Sentence of Condemnation should not speedily be executed, and that there should be assured hopes of escaping Destruction, and returning to Happiness, for all those who make not their Condition desperate, by continuance in Sin, and rejecting of the Cure which his Spirit would work upon them: Now the Work of his Spirit is to plant and increase Grace in their Hearts, to heal the Diseases, and remove the Weakness which Sin hath caused, that they may be enabled to walk in the ways of Holiness to their Everlasting Rest; and the sending forth of his healing Spirit was the Fruit of his Blood: Now as it will assuredly damn Men to despise the Blood of Christ, as if it was of no force to be a Ransom, nor to attain those Ends for which the Gospel saith it was shed, so is it as dangerous and damnable to resist and slight the Spirit of Christ, let them pretend what esteem they will for his Blood. A like Mistake also it is, flowing from the former, to limit the Notion of *free Grace* to meer pardoning Mercy, when as it includes sanctifying Grace also: For in the Instance now given, the Physick I hope was a Free Gift to the Prisoners, as the Ransom that was paid for them, notwithstanding this was without them, and the other to be taken into them. And in like manner is the giving of the Spirit into us, as purely from the Grace and

and Mercy of God (though merited by Christ) as the giving of his Son for us, and accepting of us for his sake. This I was willing to hint, lest any when they hear or read of being saved by *Free Grace*, should dream of a Salvation to be had by a meer Pardon, without being sanctified by the Spirit.

That the making Men holy in their Hearts and Lives was a principal end of Christ's Death, without which no Happiness is to be attained, is, I say, a Truth so evident in the very tenour of the Gospel, that it may seem needless to produce particular Proofs; yet amongst the rest read these few, *Eph. 2. 10. We are his Workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, &c. Eph. 5. 25, 26, 27. — Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctifie and cleanse it, &c. and that it might be holy and without blemish. 1 John 3. 8. The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the Works of the Devil. 1 Pet. 3. 24. Who bare our Sins, that we being dead to Sin should live unto Righteousness. Tit. 3. 4, 5, 6. — According to his Mercy he saved us, by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Read also Matth. 1. 22. Luke 1. 7, 5. Rom. 6. 11. Gal. 1. 4. Tit. 2. 12, 13, 14. Heb. 9. 14. Now though I acknowledge it is by the Help of the Spirit; that we are brought to believe, for *Faith it self is the Gift of God, Eph. 2. 8.* yet I think we shall ordinarily find the Promises of the Spirit to be made to those who are already Believers, to advance and carry on the Work of God upon their Souls. And to this end, and of this nature is that Grace which is signified and given forth by the Sacrament, even to refresh and nourish the Souls of Believers, to confirm and increase those Graces that are wrought in them, and to bring them forward to farther degrees of Perfection. And thus much the very Elements themselves do teach us; for as Bread is the support and stay of Life, and Wine that which makes glad the Heart of Man, and both are needful for the maintaining of*



Life, and increasing our Strength, so are the Body and Blood of Christ alike necessary and useful to our Souls ; for he himself hath told us, that his *Flesh is Meat indeed, and his Blood is Drink indeed ; and that he who eats his Flesh and drinks his Blood dwelleth in him, and hath Eternal Life ;* with much more to the same purpose, *John 6.* The proper meaning whereof, as will appear by the Context, and the occasion of that Discourse, I suppose, is, That they who believe in him, having the same expectations of Spiritual Life from him, that they have of Temporal Life from their Food, and accordingly receive, digest, and improve his Doctrine, hoping for remission of Sins through his Blood, giving entertainment to his Spirit, and are filled and fed with those Graces which he gives out, that all such shall live for ever. And then in a secondary sense, these words may be applyed to the Sacrament ; so far as this Faith in Christ, whereby Grace is expected and derived from him, is here particularly acted : for thus he who in the Sacrament eats the Flesh and drinks the Blood of Christ hath Eternal Life ; that is, he who comes with that fitness of Soul as to be made partake of the Blessings and Mercies hereby presented, and earnestly desires, that of Christ's Fulness he may receive suitable supplies of Grace. To the same purpose seems the Apostle to speak, *1 Cor. 10. 16, 17. The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ ? And the Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ ? For we being many Members are one Body.* As if he should have said, Hereby we have a Communion with Christ himself, we profess our Relation to, and Interest in him ; and the Benefits which come by him are communicated to us who truly believe in him ; his Spirit is diffused and shed abroad upon us, and thereby we, who make up one mystical Body, whereof he is the Head, being united and ingrafted into him, as Members do live by him, being acted and upheld by that Life and Vigour which he gives and continues to us.

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Since then here is Spiritual Food, sanctifying Grace held forth and communicated to Souls rightly disposed, this farther informs us what kind of Persons Communicants ought to be. The Dispositions of Soul particularly suited to this Benefit are, 1. *An earnest desire after Grace to be given in*; and 2. *A resolution to improve this Grace received.* Hither Christians are to come, earnestly longing to have Communion with Christ himself, who is not only the Master of the Feast, but the very Food whereupon the Believer lives; and this Communion we have by his liberal Communications of the Graces of his Spirit to necessitous Souls. This desire of Grace is that which is signified by those Expressions of *hungering* and *thirsting*; which we so often meet with in Scripture; answerable to which the Spiritual Things desired are represented by Things to be eaten and drank, as by Bread, Meat, Milk, Water and Wine. And they are here shadowed forth under the Elements of Bread and Wine, and must be hungered after by all that come to this Ordinance; which teacheth us, *that none are fit to come, that have not already received such beginnings of Grace as may cause them to long for more*; who have not such a Spiritual Life wrought in them, as may put them upon care to have this Life supported and increas'd. None can feel Hunger but they that live; none can desire after greater measures of Grace, who have not in some sort known and tasted the sweetness and excellency thereof. But no humble Souls need therefore be discouraged, as if they were not worthy to feast at this Table, where none are welcome but such as have true Grace wrought in them, since they may be confident of their acceptance, if they can really find in themselves an Appetite to the Provisions made for them, an hearty and *sincere* desire that their Spiritual Wants may be supplied, their Weakness strengthened, and all their Distempers healed: And what true Christian, whose Grace is never so low, but finds in himself a love to, and a longing after more? But this indeed condemns those who feel no need of any

Nourishment for their Souls, and therefore either wholly neglect Sacraments, and other Means whereby it is to be had; or else come without any Stomach at all, and content themselves with the shell and outside of the Duty, which will never feed them. These full Souls, that loath the Honey-comb, are like to be sent empty away, whilst the hungry only shall be filled with good Things. Now to such sickly, listless Souls, that even nauseate the most wholesome Food, I would say something briefly in order to their cure, to bring them so far into frame that they may come with quickened Appetites and enlarged Desires to the Lord's Table, as perceiving there are such good things here to be had, which they do most of all stand in need of.

1. In order hereto, labour to get *sensible what needy empty Creatures you are*; for till then you are not like to seek out for a supply. Consider, I mean, chiefly how destitute you are by Nature, and to this very day, of that which is the true Riches, the Beauty and Dignity of the Soul, in that you are so unlike to God, so full of Corruption and Wickedness, so empty of that Spiritual Wisdom, that Holiness, Humility, Heavenly-mindedness, and the like excellencies, which alone can render you amiable in the sight of your Maker. You cannot imagine, if you have well studied your own Hearts, that you brought into the World with you, all that Grace which is of absolute necessity to perfect and accomplish your Natures; and it is too sad a sign you are still without it, whilst you have no more mind to those Means which God hath ordained for the conveyance and increase of it. How happy a thing now was it, if you were but thoroughly convinced of your own wants; when you do but perceive you need Food, or Raiment, or Physick, how industrious and impatient are you till you have one way or other got what you would have? And thus ardently desirous would you be after the Graces of God's Spirit, if you did rightly apprehend, that these are the Food, and Cloathing, and Physick of  
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the Soul. But alas, how do People generally labour under the fortiftness, and self-conceitedness, which was charged upon the *Laodicean Church*, that *thought her self rich, increas'd with Goods, needed nothing, and knew not that she was wretched and miserable, poor and blind, and naked*, Rev. 3. 17. 'Tis one of the greatest Difficulties in the World to bring Men to judge of their Poverty or Riches by the Temper and Frame of their Souls; to convince them that they are poor and needy, whilst they are graceless, tho' they should overflow in Wealth, and abundance of all external Things.

2. Wherefore in the next place, let me advise you to beware of a secret mistake which ruins millions, in imagining that outward comforts may serve well enough to make amends for all your necessities; that the husks of Worldly Enjoyments may serve instead of the Bread that is in the Father's House. Oh take heed of inordinate thirsting after these puddels, or of wallowing in them. Do not so eagerly pursue such unsatisfactory Trifles as carnal Profits and Pleasures, which divert you from the pursuit of those Things that most concern you; but examine well what there is in them to do good to an immortal Soul, which you cannot but account your best part. Beware then of being so devoted to the pleasing of your Flesh, that you should be thereby stupified to a regardlessness of your Soul. The luscious Fare which the World affords, cloyes the Mind of Man, and spoils his Appetite, and puts him out of relish with his own most proper Food. This is the undoing of the most, they are so full of the Creature, if not in their Hands yet in their Hearts, that they have no mind nor room, to entertain any Thing of God there. Every Man breathing finds himself a needy Creature, that cannot live upon himself, but must have something from without brought in to give him Satisfaction: but then the Misery is, they think their Wants are all of that nature, that Things here below may supply them. The Poor think there is nothing they need so much as better Food and Raiment, more

Plenty, and Ease, and Esteem in the World; and they who abound in these Things, because they see others excel them, think they want such and such greater Estates and Dignities to make them happy. Though they find after all their attainments, that still they are restless, discontented, and wanting something else, they scarce know what; which might convince them, that it is only from God they can receive satisfaction by having their Natures perfected with those Graces which may fit them for that Communion with him in Love and Delight, wherein the Soul of Man can only find Rest and Contentment. This, I say, they might learn from those restless infinite desires of their own Hearts, if they would but heedfully attend to the nature thereof; but being more cruel to themselves than any Parent to his Child, when the Soul calls for Bread, they give it a Stone; endeavouring to put it off with Things that concern the Body alone, whilst that within them, which is most needy, still remains so, and is suffered to pine and starve. As if an hungry Man should fill his Mouth with Meat, and let nothing down into his Stomach. Whilst you are fondly endeavouring to quiet your Minds, and accomplish your selves with any thing that is without your Souls, be it Riches, Pleasures, Honours, Friends, and all the Accommodations of the outward Man, which the World most dotes upon, you are as verily besotted and deceived, as he thinks to ease a violent Pain at his Heart with putting on a Rich Suit of Cloaths; or to supply the want of enlivening Blood and Spirits by painting his Face. Your Necessities and Diseases are deep and inward; your very Souls are out of order, and nothing in the World will do you any good, but what gets within you, and changes your Apprehensions, Desires and Affections, and makes you quite other Persons than now you are. Wherefore I would beg you to fix this Truth deep in your Minds, *that since you are become poor and naked through the loss of God's Image, which was the Riches and Beauty of the reasonable Creature, it's never like to be*

well with you, till you be again restored to his Image, which is by being brought to the knowledge and love of him, to an universal submission, and exact conformity to his Will.

3. And when you are brought to this knowledge of your wants, and the nature of them, then consider well that it is by Jesus Christ alone that you can be satisfied and supplied. The Law was given by Moses, but by him comes Grace and Truth, 1 John 1. 17. He is the Mediator, through whom, and for whose sake we receive from God whatever our Souls stand in need of. He by his Death hath purchas'd all Things necessary for our Salvation; he is ascended on high, and hath received Gifts for his People. As King and Head of his Church, he communicates to his Members those Graces, that by his Death and Intercession he hath obtained for them, and they are replenish'd with the fulness of him who filleth all in all. And then you are to take notice, that Christ hath appointed Duties to be performed by us, and set up Ordinances, which we are diligently to attend upon, and by his Spirit accompanying them, he conveys Grace to the Hearts of those that are conscionable in the use of these Means. Such are hearkening to, and meditating upon the Word, John 17. 17. Sanctifie them by thy truth, thy Word is truth. 1 Pet. 2. 2. As new born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that you may grow thereby. And Prayer to the Father in his Name, John 14. 13. Luke 11. 13. — How much more will your Heavenly Father give the Spirit to those that ask him? Jam. 1. 5. If any Man lack Wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all Men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. Such also is the Sacrament of Baptism, being duly improved; Gal. 3. 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ; Rom. 6. 3, 4. 1 Pet. 3. 21. And lastly, this receiving of the Lord's Supper, which is our feeding upon Christ who is the Paschal Lamb sacrificed for us, and herein to Believers, in a Spiritual sense, is afforded a Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, as we may find in the Apostle's words before mentioned. And when



you have but arrived to a sense of your indigence, and Christ's fulness suitable thereto, there will necessarily arise in you, desires after a participation of that Fulness, which will bring you to, and prepare you for those Ordinances, wherein these desires may be gratified.

Lastly, I would advise you to *beware, of ever entertaining a conceit, that you are become so full now, that you need nothing* : for that's a plain sign you are poor and know it not ; your Stomachs are filled with Wind instead of solid Meat. And whilst you are puffed up with this self-conceit, you will be hindered from seeking after what you really want. He that thinks his Barns full when they are empty, may through his Mistake first live in Idleness, and after come to Beggary. He that dreams of such perfection, as makes all helps Christ hath appointed needless to him, neither knows himself, nor considers what a God he hath to serve, nor what a Law he hath given him to walk by. It's much to be feared, that he who thinks he hath Grace enough, hath yet got no saving Grace at all. He that knows enough is very ignorant, he that's humble enough is still exceeding proud, and so of the rest. For *he that hath tasted that the Lord is gracious*, longs after fuller Communion with him. He that drinks of the Water Christ gives, though his sickly Thirst after Creatures will be cured, yet will such a Thirst after more of Christ arise in him, as will never be quenched, till he be drenched into the Ocean of Grace and Joy. Wherefore study thy self, study the Duty of this whole present state, wherein we are enjoyn'd to *grow in Grace* ; and learn hence so much Humility, so much Wisdom, as to own thy necessities, and not to go about to cover them, for they will not always be hid ; but rather use all means to supply them whilst they are afforded.

And as there is required in all Receivers an earnest longing after Sanctifying Grace, which is here vouchsafed ; to the other Qualification suitable hereto, I told you is a *Resolution to improve this Grace* ; that is to lay it out, and shew forth the Fruit of it in an holy Conversation.

tion. This is an effect of the former, and indeed necessarily flows from the Nature of Grace, which is no way desirable but for Use and Exercise; nor is it possible that it should ordinarily lye still in the Heart, and not be brought forth into Act, and shewn in the Life. He that desires Patience, Humility, Purity, Temperance, to what purpose is it but to overcome the Temptations which he meets with in the World, to the contrary Vices, and to shew forth these Fruits of the Spirit in his Conversation? Whence it appears, that no Man is worthy to come to the Lord's Table, *who is not resolved by the Grace of God to live an Holy Life*, and to be led by the Spirit in all his ways. He that hath got any Sin which he is resolv'd to keep, is not like to have any desire after that Grace which should mortifie and quell his Sin; nor any mind to remember that Death which was to deliver us from this present evil World. He's like to be far from a right remembrance of Christ, who will not be perswaded to imitate him; for certainly that's one end of our remembering his Death, that we may thereby be drawn to follow his Example, which he gave us then as well as in his Life, by his Constancy, Patience, Charity to his Enemies, and ready Resignation of himself to his Father's Will. *As he walked, so ought we to walk*, and from his very Death may we fetch Directions for our Life. This resolution for Holiness which I am speaking of, is indeed one branch of our Faith in Christ, being no other than our consent to take him for our King, to guide and govern us in all our Thoughts, Words, and Actions: and therefore having said something to it under that Head, as also the former of Repentance, I shall at present pass it over.

## C H A P. VIII.

*The third Benefit is Eternal Happiness with God.*

3. **T**H E last of those Benefits which I named, obtained for us by the Death of Christ, and to be remembred at the Sacrament, is *Eternal Happiness*. It is by his *Resurrection from the dead*, and consequently by his Death, that Believers have a *lively hope of an Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for them*, 1 Pet. 3. 4. It was his *Blood that redeemed them to be Kings and Priests to God*, Rev. 5. 9, 10. *He gave his flesh for the life of the World*, John 6. 51. By Jesus Christ God calls us to *Eternal Glory*, 1 Pet. 5. 10. He opened the entrance into Paradise, which Sin had shut up. It was his Will not only that they who believe in him, should be kept from the place where Satan was, but that they should also *be with him where he is*, John 17. 24. This he pray'd for, this he dyed for, and is gone before to prepare a place for them, and keeps them here to prepare them for that place, and being ready they shall enter into the Kingdom. He receives their Spirits when they dye, and will raise up their Bodies at the last Day. *Now their Life is hid with Christ in God, and when he appears, then shall they also appear with him in Glory*, Col. 3. 3, 4. Be we sure then this Death of Christ cannot be remembred as it ought, if the Glory purchas'd thereby be forgotten. How can we remember a dying Christ, but withal we must call to mind, that he vanquish'd this Death, is risen again and ascended into Glory, whither in due time he will exalt his People? Moreover, that Covenant which is sealed to by this Sacrament, promiseth an Everlasting Kingdom to Believers; and can any Man forget such a Benefit, even whilst he is receiving a confirmation of his Right to it? Again here is that Grace given out which is the pledge, the seed,



feed, the beginning and foretast of Glory; here is the Meat that endures to everlasting Life; and who can forget his Journeys-end whilst he is taking Food to strengthen him for his Travel? To conclude, here's a Communion of Saints, which does in some measure shadow out and signifie that perfect Communion which they shall have one with another, when all the Elect shall be gathered from the four corners of the Earth, and with *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*, shall sit down, and for ever remain in the Kingdom of God: Now hence it appears, that the worthy Receiver must be one, *who hath taken the Heavenly Glory for his Portion*; who hath got a Treasure above, and there placed his Heart and Hopes; for none but such a one can with any life and raisedness remember this Glory, which is to be revealed. He that is wont to solace himself with the Contemplation thereof, will rejoyce in every thing that hath a relation to it, much more in the remembrance of that Price that was paid for it. But how can the Earth-worm, whose Soul lies groveling upon the Dust, bring himself to any affectionate thoughts of hidden Treasures, which cannot be got into his Bags nor Coffers, which he cannot so much as get a sight of? Nor can the swinish voluptuous Sinners, that feed upon none but the muddy delights of Sense, take any Comfort in the forethoughts of pure and spiritual Pleasures, such as are prepared for exalted purified Souls. Any, whoever they be, that place their chief Contentment on Earth, are not like, with any pleasure, to think of that time, when they must leave this Earth, and enter upon another State where are no such sensual Enjoyments as here they bless themselves in. Ignorant narrow Souls have no Heart to think of what shall be thousands and millions of Years to come. These poor sordid Spirits are so glewed to the little Trifles of the World, that they look not so high as after Crowns and Scepters which Christ hath in store for his faithful followers. And they who never took much pains to secure and clear up their evidence for Heaven, but have  
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taken it for granted, that they must needs go thither at last, or count it an indifferent thing whether they do or not, will be far from those lively apprehensions of the greatness of that Love which purchas'd it, and of the excellency of the Bliss it self, which are necessary for him who can rightly remember either.

Now to bring those who are yet strangers hereto, to such an apprehension of the Glory to come by Christ, that they may chuse it as their Portion, and so be joyfully taken up in the expectations thereof: In one word I would desire thee, whoever thou art, that hast but so much common Reason as to distinguish between good and evil, to consider well whether thou hast not a Soul as well as a Body, and whether this Soul must not remain in being and alive, when thy Body is rotting in the Earth, and whether then it doth not as much, yea, infinitely more concern thee to seek out for somewhat, that may at that time make thy Soul happy, than for what may now please thy Senses? Yea, since thou must live somewhere for ever, think whether it is not more worthy thy Care, to provide for an everlasting Well-being, than for the Comforts of a frail short Life. If thou art thus far convinced, then make an impartial search, whether there be any thing here below that's able to make thee perfectly happy. Thy Houses and Lands, thy Pleasures and Honours, will any or all of these give in all that Felicity which thou desirest or needest? Are they of the same nature with thy Soul; or will they last as long as it will last; must not all thy merry days at length come to an end? And wilt thou be ever the better for all thou hast enjoy'd when once it's over? Will the remembrance give thee any satisfaction? *In that Night wherein thy Soul shall be required of thee*, what Advantage wilt thou have from the Goods thou had'st laid up for many Years? Yea, or from those Goods thou had'st liv'd upon the Years before? When the Earth and all its Works shall be burnt up, where will all thy Possessions and Treasures be? If thou hast nothing to live on, but what will be turned  
into

into Flames, what wilt thou then fix upon? At that day when there shall be no Marrying, or giving in Marriage, no Wives or Children, no Relation or Friends, whose Society will afford any such Comfort as here it did; when the Interest of Princes and Great Ones, whose Favour was here thy shelter and thy pride, shall all be vanish'd, what will thy confidence in Men avail thee? Examine these, or any other outward Prop whereon thou leanest, and see whether it be not a broken Reed. And if so, except thou art resolv'd against thy own Happiness, methinks thou shouldst now only make choice of that which will never give thee cause to repent what thou didst, as all things will, but the Eternal Glory which God hath promised to those that love him. But he that can once upon good grounds say, *This Heaven is mine, I shall see the Face of God with Joy, and live in his Love for ever,* may now lead a serene and chearful Life in the midst of all Occurrences; and need not to be daunted at Death it self, but rather rejoyce, as it takes him to the possession of his Treasure, wafts him to his own home. Wherefore if thou love thy Life, be perswaded to aim at this highest Glory: Let nothing short of it content thee; think no condition hard to get it; rest not till thou hast made it as sure as thou canst that it's thine: And then having thus fix'd thy end, thou may'st travel on with alacrity and speed, and take abundance of Comfort in the fore-thoughts of thy Future Bliss, in using all Helps afforded in thy journey to it, and in the remembrance of that Precious Blood which was shed to purchase it, and by consequence wilt be fitted to celebrate the Sacrament.



## C H A P. IX.

V. *It must be a thankful Remembrance.*

**I**T is not possible that the Death of Christ can be remembered as it ought, without the *most hearty and unfeigned thankfulness to God, for so great and glorious a Mercy.* Hath he the Heart of a Man that can contemplate the Sufferings of Christ, and the infinite unspeakable Benefits thereby procured for poor Sinners, and not find himself raised to return Thanks and Praise to God, for his gracious dealings with Mankind? This Duty is so proper to the Lord's Supper, that hence it anciently obtained the name of *Eucharist*, a return of Thanks. Since then every Man, who partakes thereof, ought to be thus truly thankful to God for his Love revealed in Christ, this again acquaints us what kind of Persons Communicants must be, namely, *such who are capable of rendering acceptable Praise to God,* which doth but give farther evidence of the necessity of those Qualifications before laid down. None but such as have been made sensible of the Evil of Sin, and of the Danger they were thereby liable to, will be heartily thankful for that Mercy which prevented this Misery, by purchasing and vouchsafing the Forgiveness of their Sins. How formal and hypocritical are his Thanks like to be for Christ, who never yet saw what need he stood in of him? Will he thank you for a Plaister that never felt himself wounded? Can he have any grateful sense of the Love that pluck'd poor Sinners as Brands out of the Fire, who never perceived himself in any such Danger? Can he be thankful for Ease and Rest, who never felt his strong Lusts, nor the Curse of the Law and Wrath of God, as any load or burden upon him? Nor can he be thankful for the Grace that was given by Christ, who had far rather keep his Sins, than be renewed and sanctified.

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Little Thanks will he return for the Light who is but disturbed and troubled with it, and so far ashamed by it, that he cannot pursue his wicked Designs with that freedom and eagerness as he could before whilst he was more in the dark, where he had still rather remain. How can he thank God for Grace, who rejects and despiseth it? For being taken out of the snares of the Devil, who wilfully fastens himself into them? Will he praise God for liberty and ability to serve him, who saith of his Service, *what a weariness is it?* and thinks it would be better for him if he might live as he list, and never be put upon so much trouble as Godliness brings along with it? Nor can he be thankful for the Glory to be had by Christ, who hath not a sound perswasion of the certainty and excellency of it, and who hath not firmly resolved to take it for his Portion. He that knows nothing better than Bodily Enjoyments, and would think himself undone was he stript of these, is like to be very cold in giving Thanks for Spiritual Blessings. In a word, he that is sensible of no great Benefit he shall have by Christ either here or hereafter, cannot be expected to have any great measure of thankfulness for this Mercy which he so little understands. And this is the Case of all unhumbled, unsanctified ones, to whom the Gospel is hid, their Minds being darkened by the God of this World. And if these poor senseless Creatures should with a few feigned words pretend to give God Thanks for Jesus Christ, yet would it be but the Sacrifice of Fools and meer Lip-service, and therefore no way acceptable to the most holy God. Yea indeed they would hereby but very solemnly mock the Divine Majesty, whilst they thank him for those Mercies which they will not accept at his hands; praising him for Jesus Christ and the Benefits he brings, whilst they will have none of him or them, on the Terms that God propoundeth. No, no, it is only the broken-healed Heart, the humble raised Soul, that can be feelingly and affectionately thankful to God for a Saviour, who hath wrote so great Works for them and in them, and laid up such

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great Provisions for the time to come. They that were *lost but are found*, they that were *dead but are alive*, in these will their Heavenly Father take pleasure, and these will rejoyce in his Love, and return Praise to him, who *sent his Son to seek and save that which was lost*.

To bring Men into such a state and frame, that they may be disposed and enabled, from an inward sense of his Goodness, to render such Thanks to the Father of Mercies, as may be well-pleasing to him; I should only need to repeat what was before laid down, to bring them to accept of Christ, which when once they are brought to, and arrived to any hopes of their acceptance with God through him, then both in Heart and Voice, with their Lips and Lives will they adore and praise him, who *called them out of Darkness into his marvellous Light*. Wherefore study well your many and great Necessities which Christ alone can supply. Consider to what Miseries by Sin you stand exposed, from which he alone can keep you. Remember what he did and suffered, how low he condescended for the sake of Man, and remember your own utter unworthiness, that ever the least Love or Regard should have been manifested to you; and yet consider what great Things are done for you; into how good a State matters are brought, what abundant Blessings are freely bestowed on the humble and believing, what rich and precious Promises are made them, what Mercies are given for this Life, and that to come, Grace and Glory, and whatever is good for Men, nothing is withheld from them. Let but the Consideration of all the rich and precious Priviledges which Christ gives to his Servants, sink into thy Soul, and then thou wilt find it even impossible, not to magnifie the Author and Purchaser of such Gifts; nor wilt thou be able to refrain from Expressions of thy Gratitude and Love; and therefore may'st worthily come to the Sacrament, there to exercise and express those holy Affections.



## C H A P. X.

VI. *It must produce a holy Love to Saints.*

**H**E that rightly remembers the Death of Christ, and well considers the infinite Love herein shewn to Mankind, cannot but be thereby wrought to an hearty Love to all his fellow Christians. And that's the last qualification I shall mention, necessary for all Communicants, and which flows from their remembrance of Christ, to wit, that they may be in Charity with all Men, and have an especial endeared Love to all true Christians, both those that communicate with them and others. To this great Duty of Brotherly Love we have the most forcible Engagement that ever could be imagined, by the Example of our Blessed Lord laying down his Life for us; and his Behaviour at Death, even praying for his Persecutors; doth sufficiently tell us how we ought to behave our selves towards our bitterest Adversaries. We see then what a Spirit we shall have wrought in us by a right remembrance of our dying Saviour, not only towards our Friends, but our Enemies themselves. As for that Love that ought to be amongst all true Christians, we find this is the new Command, that he hath inculcated upon us, and obliged us to by the great Example of his unparallel'd Love, that we also should love one another, *John 15. 12, 13. 1 John 3. 16.* And this he hath made the very Badge of his true Disciples, whereby they should be known from the rest of the World, *John 13. 34, 35.* And one particular end of our meeting together at the Lord's Table, is to testify and strengthen our mutual Love. This we shew by our eating and drinking together, which is the custom of Friends: and this is one reason why this Sacrament is called the *Communion*, in that Christians have here the most endearing Fellowship with each other. For hereby is not only represented their Uni-

on with Christ their Head, and their Spiritual Communion with him, but that nearness of Relation they have amongst themselves, being mystically united into one Body whereof Christ is the Head, 1 Cor. 10. 17. *For we being many are one Bread, and one Body: For we are all partakers of that one Bread.* Each Christian is so related to, and joyned with the other, that they go to the making up of one Body, as the several Grains compacted together make one Bread; and by their joint participation of this one Bread, they declare themselves to be but one Body, the Children of one Father, living in one Family, and feeding at the same Table, upon the very same Food, even upon Christ himself, who is the *true Bread that came down from Heaven*; and upon their being united to Christ as Head, is founded this their so near and intimate Relation to each other, to be Fellow Members of the same Body; as they that have the same Sovereign are Fellow-subjects, they that have the same Parents are Brethren: And by their feeding on this Sacramental Food, and Christ himself therein, *from whom the whole Body being fitly joined together makes increase, unto the edifying of it self in love,* Eph. 4. 15, 16. Having here a Communion with him, which fills and acts them with the same Spirit; hereby, I say, they receive a farther bond and disposition to the greatest unity of Hearts and Affections. So that we are especially engaged before our attendance upon this Ordinance, *to go our way, and be reconciled to our Brother. The leaven of Malice, among all other Wickedness, is to be purged out, when we keep this Feast,* 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8. And indeed we shall find that the general sense of People, that they ought to be in Charity with their Neighbours before they come to the Sacrament, whilst they discover too little sense of the necessity of other Graces that are equally needful; yet whilst they remain destitute of this very Charity it is which they acknowledge to be so necessary; for, alas! they are not so easily brought to the practice of the Duty as to acknowledge and commend it. For the pla

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Truth is, none can rise up to this excellent Temper of Spirit, wherein one half of our Religion consists, but he who is ingrafted into Christ, and transformed into his Likeness by the Spirit of Love, which may direct those who are yet void hereof, what course to take for the attainment of the same, namely, to get united to Christ by a lively Faith and fervent Love, whereby they shall find kindled in their Breasts a new Affection to all that do with them love the Lord Jesus. For certainly it is not enough for us that we have no Malice in our Hearts against any, nor wish them any hurt; this is a poor description of Christian Charity, and may be found in a Turk or Jew; but there ought to be in us, besides a general Love to all Mankind, which makes us desirous of their good, a peculiar tender Love to all Christ's faithful Servants, which causeth us to take delight in them, as such in whom we behold the Image of God shining forth in their holy Conversations, and begets in us unfeigned desires for their good both of Soul and Body, and makes us willing to contribute our assistance thereto, according to our Ability and their Necessities, inward or outward, and inclines us to rejoyce in their good in some measure as if it was our own; and hereby our Hearts are to knit to them, that we hold greatest Familiarity with them, and take pleasure in their Society and Conference, and more especially in joining with them in the Worship and Service of God. This is a most sweet Affection, and the exercise of it is exceeding pleasant to a gracious Soul: Which, was it more common in the World, would reform it from a Wilderness into a kind of Paradise; and the Perfection of it will be one great part of our Future Happiness. But this true Christian Love can dwell in none but such in whom God dwells, who is Love. Only they who are recovered out of the selfish carnal state, and are brought home to God by Jesus Christ, are the Men that are capable of this sincere Love to their Brethren, for which many clear Reasons might be given, was it needful and pertinent. But this



may suffice for all, that this Affection is grounded upon, and follows our spiritual Relation, and therefore a Man must first be in Christ himself, before he can love another purely as his Brother in Christ, as a Fellow-member of the same Body. He that hath not submitted himself to his Prince, cannot love another upon account of his being a Fellow-subject with him to the same Sovereign: And hence it is we find this given in as a Character of our Regeneration, 1 John 3. 14. *Hereby we know we are past from Death to Life, because we love the Brethren.* Most certain it is, that they who find not in themselves a Love to any People in the World upon account of their being made like to God in Holiness, are destitute of true Love to God himself. Wherefore I would advise you to try your selves by this note, look into your own Hearts, and look abroad amongst those you hold your dearest Friends, and examine what it is that draws out your Love towards them. Are they therefore dear to you, because they appear to you to be lovers of God, and such as have a great Zeal for his Glory, because they are of pious exemplary Lives, and therefore (so far as you can discern) of gracious Spirits? Do you love them as those that are bought with the same Blood, and sanctified by the same Spirit with your selves? As such who are helpful to your Souls, or receive help from you, and walk in the same holy way, and with whom you hope to live for ever in the same Glory? Or is not all your Affection founded upon carnal Reasons, and bestowed only upon your Kindred, or such that have done you Courtesies in Worldly matters; but as for the rest, you see no Reason why you should love one more than another. Nay farther, do you not find your Hearts secretly rise against such holy Persons, as I before mentioned, so that you had rather be in any Company than theirs, and could even with the World rid of them, because their blameless Lives do condemn and shame yours; and sometimes their loving Admonitions check and disturb you, as Lot was a Trouble to the Sodomites? Are you not so

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far from a reverend esteem of Godliness, that you can rather scoff at it, tho' perhaps under other names, and are prone to think it nothing else but Fancy and Folly to be so shy of Sin, and so extream careful to please God? If it be thus, for certain you are no better than haters of God himself, as he is holy and just, though it may be you think not so much by your selves. He that loves the Father will love the Child also, so far as he's like him; he that loves the Person will love his Picture, *He that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?* 1 John 4. 20. Wherefore seek to get your Hearts deeply affected with the Glories, and Excellencies of the Blessed God, and you will find your selves carried out to a great esteem of any shadows and resemblances of thole in his People. Let Christ be once the chiefest of ten thousands to your Souls, altogether lovely and desirable, and then you will count thole in whom he hath copied out himself, and shed abroad his own Spirit, to be the *only excellent ones upon Earth*, in whom you will take great delight. You will then so fall in love with his Image wherever you discern it, that in comparison thereof you will even disdain all those Worldly Excellencies which do so dazzle the Eyes of short-sighted, mean-spirited ones. That Humility, Purity, Reverence of the Divine Majesty, Gentleness, Goodness, and all other Fruits of the Spirit, which display themselves in the behaviour of the truly sanctified, will make them appear more honourable in your Eyes, and render them far more dear to you than those who have nothing to commend them to your esteem, but that they have great Estates, wear brave Cloaths, and have high Titles conferred upon them: Though you must not be wanting in those respects that are due to outward greatness, yet if you be Christians of a right stamp, you will be such as *David* mentions, when he describes a Citizen of *Zion*, Psal. 15. 4. *One in whose Eyes a vile Person is contemned, but he honourreth them that fear the Lord.* Yea farther, you will see more

reason for your Love to those that are holy, than to your Brethren, or nearest Kindred in the Flesh, or than to those that are only of the same Opinions and Principles that you your selves are of, which do lamentably confine and regulate the Affections of the most. But the right Christian Temper is far more generous and large; for being derived from the Bowels of Christ, it begets the same disposition in the Souls wherein it dwells, according to their capacity, that is in Christ himself. And therefore they that hate none, they envy none. As for the wicked miserable ones, they pity and even mourn over them, as we find Christ did, and with Patience and Meekness are ready to give them all the help they can, to bring them out of their uncomfortable dangerous Estates; but all whom they have reason to believe Christ loves, that walk as he hath enjoined all his Friends to do, these they dearly love; and such Errors or Infirmities, which will not cause Christ to withdraw his Favour from them, will not take off their Affections: for they dare not pretend to a greater strictness than their Lord, lest what they might call *pure Zeal* for him, should be found *pure selfishness*. And therefore they dare not make their own private apprehensions, which they find not in the Creed, nor in the Gospel, the standard and measure of such as must pass for godly, and be thought worthy their regard and esteem, which is the constant note of one addicted to a party: But, I say, they would have their Friendship as large as their Lord and Masters, since 'tis for his sake that they have any Friends at all, such is the Affection which God's Spirit works in his People, and with which they are possess'd so far as they are framed and moulded by his Spirit.

But moreover, the Charity requisite in Communicants, consists not only in a cordial Love to the Godly, whom they are to reckon upon as dearest Friends, but also in *forgiveness of Injuries to all that are their Enemies*, and have done or endeavoured to do them Wrong: Which Temper is of flat necessity to all that would come wor-

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thily to this Ordinance. Hither Men come expecting a Pardon; and can he look for a Pardon of his many and hainous Sins from the Great God of Heaven and Earth, who will not forgive some small Offence that he may have received from his Fellow-creature? Small, I say, for the greatest Injury that can be done us by another is exceeding small, and not worthy our notice so far as we our selves only are concerned therein. Selfish Men will never believe this; but it's a certain Truth, and so plain, that many sober Heathens do with great earnestness inculcate it. Alas what can they do, but a little hinder our thriving in the World, or deny us that Respect we should have by their careless Carriage, or speak meanly or falsely of us to lessen our Credit? Such like Trifles as these are the worst that we shall ordinarily meet with from our bitterest Enemies. And are these such insufferable Injuries, that by all means we must seek to be reveng'd? Surely, such a wicked Spirit cannot enter into the breast of a Christian, that remembers what he hath done against God, and yet what he expects from him, and what he hath already received.

And indeed there is nothing more likely to bring us to the Performance of this Duty to our Brother, than the serious Consideration of the infinite Mercy God hath shewn to us in sending his Son, and freely tending Forgiveness through him. This we find press'd upon us, *Eph. 4. 32. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Col. 3. 13. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another: If any Man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.* And to engage us the more, our forgiving of others is made a Condition of being forgiven our selves, *Matth. 6. 14, 15. For if ye forgive Men their Trespases, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you forgive not Men their Trespases, neither will your Father forgive your Trespases.* How hard-hearted must that Servant be, who, when his Lord hath forgiven him ten thousand Talents, takes his

Brother by the Throat, and casts him into Prison for an hundred Pence? How just is it that all the former Debt should be charged by his Lord upon such a Servant? as you may find in a Parable at large, *Matth. 18.* from 23. to the end, where, after Christ had told how terribly that unthankful cruel Servant was dealt with, he adds ver. last, *So likewise shall my Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your Hearts forgive not every one his Brother their Trespases.* To love God above all, and our Neighbour as our selves, are the two great Commandments, whereon depend the Law and the Prophets, and which comprehend all our Duty: and to both of these we have the greatest Help and strongest Obligation by the Death of Christ that ever could be thought on. Shall we not love him that hath thus loved us? And shall we not shew Pity and Compassion to others, who have received so much our selves? Yea, who shall be shut out from Mercy if we be unmerciful? No Spirit in the World is so contrary to the Gospel as that of Malice and Revenge, and retaining a secret Enmity and Spight against any Person whatever. As thou would'st elcape the Society and Portion of Devils hereafter, beware how thou now entertainest this Devilish Nature, than which nothing is more frequently forbidden in the Gospel, and nothing more flatly enjoined than the contrary temper, *Gal. 5. 20.* Now the Fruits of the Flesh are manifest, which are these, *Adultery, Fornication, &c. Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murders;* ver. 22. *But the Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, &c.* *Col. 3. 8.* But now ye also put off all these, *Anger, Wrath, Malice, Blasphemy, &c.* ver. 12, 13. *Put on therefore (as the Elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of Mercy, Kindness, humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering.* When the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians to rectifie the Disorders they were guilty of, in reference to the Lord's Supper, the first thing he falls upon, is the Divisions that were amongst them, *1 Cor. 11. 18.* that Composedness of

of Soul, that Humility, Self-abasement, and humble dependance upon free Mercy, which are so absolutely necessary for him that would profit by this Ordinance, do all call for a quiet, charitable Frame of Spirit towards our Brethren, when we betake our selves thereto.

And thus (by God's assistance) have I in some measure shewn, from the nature and design of this Ordinance, (which is to keep up the Remembrance of Christ) how those Persons must be qualified who can duly attend thereupon. To repeat their description once again: They who are furnish'd with the necessary Fundamental Truths of Christian Religion, and do believe them to be indeed Truths, being so verily perswaded that Christ is the Saviour of the World, that they heartily consent to take him for their Saviour, and therefore being humbled for, and resolved presently to turn from all their evil ways, do humbly expect (or at least earnestly desire) the Pardon of their Sins from the Mercy of God for his sake, and are truly willing to have their Hearts sanctified by the Spirit of God, given out through him, that they may lead an holy Life; and do depend upon him to bring them to everlasting Glory in the Enjoyment of God, upon whom they have set their dearest Love, and chuse him as their only Portion, being sincerely thankful for the manifestations of his wonderful Love in Christ, and by the Power of his Love are in Charity with all Men, forgiving their Enemies, and having a peculiar Affection to the Members of Christ: These, and only these, are fit to partake of the Lord's Supper. Wherefore I intreat thee, whoever thou art, that would'st not wilfully delude thy own Soul, and rush upon this Duty to thy hurt, take thy self to task, and examine well whether thou art such a one as I have here described: Yea, if thou hast any desire to escape everlasting Misery, and be received into Heaven when thou dyest, examine thy self; for except thou beest or becomest such a one, as sure as God is true, thou art never like to be saved.



## C H A P. XL

*An Invitation to come to Christ and his Sacrament,  
with Motives thereto.*

*Use.* **M**Y next work is now to call upon and exhort all, thus to examine and prepare themselves, and so to come and eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup. Ho ! All you that have any Love to the blessed Jesus, who loved you to the shedding of his warmest Hearts-blood for your sakes, come hither and *show forth his Death till he come*. If Christ be precious to you, let his Memory be precious, and be you careful to preserve it by your due and frequent attendance upon this Ordinance, set up on purpose for the Remembrance of him. All you whose Eyes have been opened to discern the vileness of your Natures and Conversations, come hither, and give a kindly vent to your Sorrow, beholding Sin at the worst, in those Wounds that it gave to your dearest Saviour. All you that are indeed convinced that Christ is the true Messiah, come forth from God to give Life to the World, and are resolved to hearken to him that your Souls may live, come hither, and before God, Angels, and Men, profess these Resolutions, and bind your selves over to him, to be his Disciples and most obedient Servants. Be not ashamed of the Cross of Christ, but avow it before all the World, that your Hope or Happiness is placed only in that *Jesus, who was slain and hanged on a Tree*, but is risen again, and ascended into the Heavens ; hereby own that you are Christians, let others be what they will. Come hither all you that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, and feed upon him, who here conveys himself to the empty longing Soul, and satisfies his People with good things suitable to their wants. Come hither poor dejected drooping Soul, that dost unfeignedly love thy Lord, but art afraid thou shalt

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never obtain his Favour ; come and see what he hath done to assure thee of the reality, the freeness and fullness of his Love ; Come and taste the Provisions he hath made for thy Comfort, and rejoyce in the sense of his Bounty. All you that expect shortly to look your Redeemer in the Face, come hither and behold him, where till then, you may most clearly discern him. Here stamp his Image firmly upon your Minds, that he may live in your Breasts, though for a while he is out of your sight, that, till you shall see him, you may never be forgetful of him. Come hither young ones, and betimes lift your selves under Christ your Leader, here *Remember your Creator, and Redeemer, in the days of your Youth!* Come hither ye aged that have stood idle in the Market-place till the eleventh Hour of the Day, now at length hire your selves under the Lord of the Vineyard, to be more industrious in his Service for the Hour that is behind. Come hither ye Poor, and partake of a Feast that shall cost you nothing. Come hither ye Rich, to a Feast more precious and costly than ever you were at, which cost the Master thereof his own Life to provide it. Come hither, ye Masters, and promise to become the Servants of Christ. Come hither ye Servants, and by taking Christ for your Lord become his Freemen. Yea, all you that have been the most estranged from God, and greatest despisers of Christ, yet now at length if you will come in, acknowledging the folly of your former ways, protesting against any longer continuance therein, humbly imploring Mercy and Acceptance from God through his Son, even you are invited hither, to testify the truth of your return to him, and to receive the Pardon that is ready for you. Behold, *Wisdom hath builded her House, and furnish'd her Table, and calls to all to eat of her Bread, and drink of her Wine that she hath mingled ;* to all that are fully determined to *forsake the foolish, and go in the way of understanding.* Harken you foolish Prodigals, whose Souls are out of taste with all solid Food, though you are feeding upon the luscious delights of Sin and  
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the Creature, which yet have only deluded, never satisfied you : Cast away these empty Husks, and come to a plentiful Feast here made ready, wherein you will acknowledge there is Sweetness and Fulness, if your Distempers be cured, and your Appetite and Relish changed. So large is the Commission which Christ hath granted, that in his Name I dare confidently invite all, whoever they are, or whatever they have been, even the most Profane and Sensual, Drunkards and Whoremongers, the Proud and Covetous, if now at last you will be persuaded to bid an everlasting Farewel to all your ways of Wickedness, and for the time to come walk in the holy Path, see that you are sincere, and you may come boldly to the Sacrament, there to manifest and confirm these Purposes. If at length you are weary of that miserable drudgery, wherein the Enemy and Tormentor of Mankind, the Devil, hath employed you, labouring to keep you in Bondage to Sin, than which there is not a more loathsome stinking Dungeon, more intolerable Chains in all the World ; if, I say, you would fain be delivered from this Slavery, and will *take on you Christ's ease*, *Yoke*, *that you may find rest for your Souls*, come hither and enter your selves into his Service, engaging to be subject to him all the days of your Life. In a word, all you that have been Baptized in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and understanding what that signifies do consent to the Obligations thereby laid upon you, come to the Lord's Supper, and manifest this Consent, and renew this Covenant to be the Lord's.

Some Considerations I shall lay before you, to quicken you to the Performance of this weighty Duty, which I propose not so much to those who are already prepared, that they would come to this Feast ; but rather to all indifferently, that they would prepare themselves, and come away without any longer delay.

1. To that end, first consider, *this is the express Command of Christ*, as you may find at his first Institution of this Sacrament before mentioned, *Luke 22. 19. This do*  
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*in remembrance of me.* And to whom was this Command given do you think? Only to the Apostles; or in them to all Christians? What reason can be given why it should be peculiar to them, and not common to others? They were look'd upon, and spoke to here, as Disciples, and therefore all Christ's Disciples are concerned therein. And you cannot think this was an Injunction that had reference to that time only; the very Phrase, *Remembrance*, speaks the contrary: For this implies something that's past, or absent; which shews they were to do this after the Death of Christ should be past, and ascended from them into Heaven, in remembrance of him and his Death. But to put the matter past doubt, we have the practice of the Apostles after Christ's Death and Ascension, telling us how they understood this Command: And I hope we shall find none so impudent, as to say they misunderstood it. Now though it was always wont to be accounted Profaneness to violate the Commands of Christ, yet there are a sort of Men in the World, that would make it a piece of Religion forsooth to condemn this his Injunction, and their Disobedience to his Law must pass for a sign of their Perfection. But if they stand condemned by all impartial Men, who, not only in name, but in deed, would bring more Sacraments into the Church than Christ hath done, giving the same honour to, and pleading for the same efficacy and necessity of their Inventions as of Christ's own Institutions, wherein the *Papists* are grossly guilty: What do they better, who would cast forth of the Church those Sacraments which our Lord hath ordained, as if they were useless unnecessary things, which is the Doctrine of our *Quakers*? If there was nothing else to be said in Answer to the unreasonable Pretences of these Men, is it not enough that we have a plain Command of Christ's to oppose to their Fancy? He saith to all his Followers, *Do this*, and they say, *Do it not*: Which should we rather hearken to? And hereby judge what Spirit that is, which riseth up in such flat Contradiction to the Voice of Christ?

Christ ? But farther, Can they or any Man else shew, that this Command is founded upon such Reasons, as makes it of less force and obligation to us, than to those whom it was first given to ? Do not all the grounds of this Duty which were then, still remain the same ? As I shall shew more afterward. Wherefore let them either shew where Christ hath repealed the Precept which he once gave, or let them beware of falling under the *Woe* denounced against such, *as not only break his Commands, but teach others so to do.*

And little less guilty than these are they, who, though they will grant Christ's Command in force, yet give not Obedience to it ; and though they will not say this Sacrament is unprofitable, yet by their Neglect receive no Profit from it. All you that have been long since at years of Discretion, and have had frequent Opportunities to come to the Lord's Table, and yet have not cared to inform your selves what it is you should do there, what Good you should get by it, and so have taken no Care to make Preparations for this Duty, but from Year to Year have neglected it ; what think you of this course ? I beseech you, stay a while and reflect upon it. Did you never hear of a Command given by the Lord Jesus, that all true Christians should meet together at this Supper, and there in remembrance that his Body was broken, and his Blood shed for them, eat Bread, and drink Wine, set apart for that purpose ? Hath he given a Command to this purpose, or not ? That it was spoken to the Apostles, I have told you, hinders not, but that it belongs as well to you, since if you be sincere Christians as they were, you have the same Cause to do this that they had. When Christ bids them deny themselves, love one another, and pray to the Father in his Name ; do not these Precepts reach you and I, as well as those particular Persons to whom he spake them ? And tell me if you can, why the case is not the same, as to that Command of his, which I have even now mentioned, that we should *Do this*, receive this Sacrament of his Supper,

Supper, *in remembrance of him* ? He that hath commanded you to mortifie your Lusts, to love God above all, he it is hath enjoined you to do this ; and if you think he ought to be obeyed in one thing, why not in all ? So then since you cannot but grant, that such a Command there is, what can you say for your selves who have disobeyed it ? Are you not hereby guilty of contemning the Authority of the Law-giver ? What say you ? Do you think you have herein behaved your selves as you ought ? Can you imagine, that this your Negligence and Disobedience is acceptable to the Lord Jesus ? Or do you not care whether it is or not ? I hope it is not all one with you to please or to provoke him. Does not then your Consciences by this time smite you for your Carelesness ? If not, I doubt it is seared and senseless ; if it does, then let me ask you what you intend for the time to come ? Will you hold on that course which you dare not justifie, which your own Conscience condemns you for ? Dare you still persist in the breach of a known Law ? Have you any thing to say against the Law it self, or against him that made it ? Is it not the Law of Christ the Son of God, your Redeemer ? And hath not he Power to enjoin you what he pleaseth ? Hath not he right to govern you upon account of his Redeeming you ? And are not all things delivered into his Hands by the Father ? Yea, does not the Father himself speak to you in and by him ? Does not he himself tell us, that the words which he spoke were the Father's that sent him ? *John 14. 10. and 24.* Can you then gainsay Christ's Authority ? If not, how dare you resist it ? Do you indeed take him for your Lord, or not ? Answer me one way or other. If you do not, then call your selves no longer Christians : for this your subjection is essential to your Christianity, as I have before shewed. If you do, then pray tell me, how can this consist with wilful violation of plain Precepts ? Do you take him for your Master, if you will yield him no Reverence nor Fear ? Will you not be as subject to your Lord as the



the *Centurion's* Servants were to him? To whom if he said but *Do this*, they did it. Let this be the Tryal whether you will or not: Behold Christ saith to thee in the Gospel, and now in his Name, and with Power from him, I charge thee, *Do this*, come and partake of his Supper which he hath prepared for his Friends and Followers. Here is now a *Do this*: Wilt thou obey it or not? If thou wilt not, consider well whether Christ be like to reckon thee among his faithful Servants at last; and what thou would'st think of a Servant of thy own that should carry himself thus towards thee? What thy usual Mistis and evasions are, I shall take notice anon, and give thee an Answer. Only at present let me make hast to intreat thee not to mistake me, and deceive thy self, as if I was thus earnest and importunate with thee for nothing else, but to go with thy Neighbours somerimes when a Sacrament is administred, and there take a bit of Bread, and a sup of Wine, with a little seeming Reverence, without any due Consideration before or after to what purpose it is. Canst thou be so silly as to imagine, thou hast satisfied the Will of Christ when thou hast done this? Or canst thou think thy Soul ever the better for it? Wherefore remember what it was I first exhorted thee to, namely, to *examine* and prepare thy self, and *so to eat of this Bread, and drink of this Cup*; to repent of, and set thy self against all Sin, and to devote thy self to Christ, and then to take the Sacrament as a Testimony that thou dost so, and as a Bond to oblige thee firmer to him. This I have frequently told thee; that thou may'st be sure to understand my meaning, and remember it, take it once again in this plain comparison: If a Master was about to bargain with one to be his Servant, offering so much Wages, and a Shilling in Earnest; and another that stands by, having a mind to drive on the Bargain, should perswade the Servant not to stand off, but to take his Earnest; do you not know what he meant by this? Do you think he wish'd the Man only to take the Shilling and go his way without

without any more ado? Surely no, but to agree with him to become his Servant, to do the Work he should appoint him, and to shew his Consent to this, should take the Shilling that was to be given in Earnest. Thus, Reader, being earnestly desirous to drive on a Match betwixt Christ and thy Soul, I would fain beg thee to take the Sacrament, as an evidence of thy Consent to become his faithful Servant; but upon no other Terms I'll assure thee. Wherefore if thou be resolved against the diligent service of God, and yet venturest upon this Ordinance, let the blame be upon thy own Head. Do not think to excuse thy self by saying, thou read'st a Book that told thee it was Christ's Command to all, that they should receive the Sacrament, and that therefore thou didst as thou wast instructed: For again and again have I made known to thee, that none ought to do thus but true Christians, such as believe in, love and obey the Lord Jesus; and this is that to which thou art implicitly urged by that very Command which he hath given for the frequenting his Supper.

And this I would press upon all that perform this Duty rudely and negligently, as well as on those that altogether omit it. Let not such careless ones imagine they have hitherto render'd due Obedience to this Command. For consider, when a Duty is enjoined, all that is necessary in order thereto is thereby enjoined, and the right manner of performing it also. Thus when we are commanded to pray to God, by that very Command we are engaged to get the Knowledge of God, and to believe that he can hear and help us, and also to be reverent and serious in our Prayers: For without these and the like Qualifications, we may say over many words, but we cannot properly be said to pray. Thus when Christ commands us to eat Bread, and drink Wine in remembrance of him, he hereby commands us to get our Hearts into such a frame, that we may be fit and able to remember him with those Affections, and in that manner that it befits ransomed Men to remember

their Redeemer. And therefore we must know him, and be sensible of our own Slavery, and be willing to be Redeemed by him, and be thankful for his Love, with the other Qualifications which I have before shewn to be necessary to, and included in our remembrance of him. If you make a Feast on purpose to entertain a Friend, you thereby suppose not only that he should come to your Table, but that he should come with a Stomach to eat of your Provisions. And when Christ invites Men to his Table, where he hath provided Spiritual Food under the outward Elements, do you not think he requires all that come, that they should have an Appetite to, and Desire after what he hath provided for them? Thus then have I laid open to you the flat Command of Christ, whereby you are required to put your selves in a right Posture, and come to this Feast which he hath ordained in his Church, as a Memorial of the Redemption he wrought for it. Whether you will obey it or not I cannot tell, I leave that to your choice; if you have any Reason that seems stronger than the Will of Christ, do as you shall think fit; only remember the Command I have been urging upon you, was given you by that Jesus who will be your Judge, and whose Sentence will pass according to that Word, whereof this Command is a part; and if you think you have got any such Excuse, as will bring you off clear at that Day, though you be found guilty of contemning his Law, I have no more to say, but at your own peril be it: Here I have given you faithful Warning.

Here I may farther add, that you have not only Christ's Command, but the *Example of his Apostles, Disciples, and the Primitive Christians*, to engage you to this Duty, wherein they were all consciencious and frequent, *Acts 2. 42.* They that were converted by the Preaching of the Apostles continued stedfastly in their Doctrine and Fellowship, in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers. And this you may find was the Practice of the Church of *Corinth*, (and by consequence of all other Churches then planted)



planted) in that the Apostle rectifies the Abuses they were guilty of therein, as you may find at large, 1 Cor. vi. 17. to the end. And are not we to walk as we have these for an Example, and to be followers of them as they are of Christ? Moreover, they that are skill'd in Church History tell us, that it is most certain, it was the Custom of the Primitive Christians, usually to celebrate this Sacrament every Lord's Day at least. And by the way take Notice, though we have no particular Precept in Scripture how frequently we ought to do it, yet from thence we are taught, that it ought to be done more than once; and the Practice of those who best knew the Mind of Christ may inform us, that it ought to be done often; though the particular Times are left to the Prudence of Church Governours.

2. In the next place I would wish you well to consider, whether you have not good reason to conclude, that you shall receive much Advantage from the performance of that Duty, which is recommended to you by the express Command of Christ, and the Example of his first Followers. Was there nothing else to be shewed but a Command from him, whom you acknowledge your Sovereign, one would think it enough to silence all Objections, and bring you to Obedience. But do you not moreover believe, that Christ designed the good of his Servants by the Institution of this Sacrament in his Church? Are any of his Commands grievous or unprofitable? Is not the whole design of Christian Religion evidently for our Interest, if we believe we have Immortal Souls? And can you imagine this one Duty to be an exception from all the rest? as having nothing in it which may make it worthy our Performance. Hath not he back'd his Commands with Promises, that we might have all kind of encouragement to his Service? Hath not he told us, that to those who keep his Commandments he will manifest himself? Do you think then, that when Christ first set up this Sacrament, he hereby intended any Advantage to those who should celebrate it? If not, he ap-

pointed them a mere piece of Drudgery, in some respect worse than the Jewish Ceremonies (for they had their use to the Spiritual) and even as bad as those burthen some ridiculous Ceremonies, which make up so great a part of the Popish Religion; but if you dare not affirm this, then I would know, whether the same Advantages do not still continue to this Ordinance, which were first intended to be communicated by it to the worthy Receiver? Again, did the Apostles and their Companions get any good by it, think you? If not, it's strange they should be so exact and frequent in it; if they did, fain would I know why the same Good is not still to be got by serious diligent Christians. Certainly God's Treasures of Grace are not spent, his Fountain is not drawn dry, nor never will be. He that will be the Everlasting Portion of his People, when this World is ended, hath enough sure in himself for the supply of all their Necessities, whilst they are travelling through the World. When millions of Saints have received that Grace which leads them to Glory, there is not a jot the less for those that come after. And as his Graces are not exhausted, so neither is the way of giving them forth changed; in the same manner that his Spirit accompanied the Word and Sacraments, at any time since the Gospel was publish'd, in the same manner it accompanies them still, for ought that any Man living can shew to the contrary. *Christ is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.* He who will be with his Ministers till the end of the World, will be with his Ordinances till then, and with his People in the consciencious use of them. Why should the first Christians be tyed to that which we in after Ages may neglect? Is not our Case the same with theirs? Are not our Necessities as great? And may not our Profitings also, if the Fault be not our own? To prosecute this a little farther, as I promised. Is not the Death of Christ as great a Mercy to us in these latter days of his Church, as it was to them in the first? Have not we the same Pardon offered to us, the same Promises

nises given, the same Heaven prepared, and the same  
 sanctifying Spirit to bring us thereto? Have we not then  
 the same cause to be frequently mindful of, and thank-  
 ful for these Mercies; and the Death that purchas'd  
 them, in all ways prescribed to that purpose? Are not  
 we still of the same nature that Men were then? Such  
 whose Affections are most raised and quickened by sen-  
 sible things, by the help whereof we can with greater  
 clearness and power conceive of things spiritual, and  
 can more affectionately remember what's past, when we  
 see it represented and acted afresh before our Eyes. Is  
 it not therefore our Wisdom and Duty to accept of such  
 Assistances as our Lord himself, in his Care of us, hath  
 afforded? Whereof the Sacrament of his Supper is a  
 principal one, every way fitted for that end. Were  
 they more dull than we, that they should need such  
 quickening Means which we judge our selves past the  
 use of? Had not we as much need as they to be fre-  
 quently renewing our more solemn Repentance for Sin;  
 and covenantings with God, that to the Consideration of  
 those renewed Engagements we lye under, may the more  
 over-power us to faithfulness and perseverance in his  
 Service? Are not our wants of Grace as great as theirs:  
 And therefore ought we not to wait in all those ways  
 whereby these wants may be supplied, which are the  
 same now as formerly? Is it not as rich a Mercy now as  
 ever, to have all the Blessings and Priviledges of the Co-  
 venant of Grace, whether temporal, spiritual or eternal,  
 not only represented, but made over and assured to us,  
 in such a familiar manner? Is not the exercise and streng-  
 thening of mutual Brotherly Love, by the maintaining  
 of the most endearing Christian Communion, still a  
 most pleasant and profitable Duty? Now especially,  
 when all Men have learn'd to cry out, how cold Char-  
 ity is grown! Thus you see there are very many, and  
 those no small Advantages that accrue to such as care-  
 fully manage this weighty Duty, and all of them con-  
 tinue still the same that they were in the time of the



**Apostles.** And let there be any other ground of their Practice assigned, or any other Benefit which they hereby enjoy, and I question not to prove, that we have the same, or the like Grounds, and are capable of the same Benefits with them. Thus have I shewn you, that to come in a due manner to the Lord's Table is both your Duty and your Interest; there is a Command given by your Lord, obliging you to what is good for your selves, (and indeed so do all other his Commands, if well weighed.) And what more can be said to work upon Men that have any Conscience, or any Self-love, to give Obedience? Wherefore if you be Christians, yea, if you be Men; if you have any sense of God's Authority, or of your own Necessities, make all possible hast out of that dangerous woful Estate which makes you unfit for, and unwilling to this so profitable a Duty; and your Souls being made ready, let them bring your Bodies hither. Having been larger in these, I shall be brief in those that follow.

3. It is much to be feared that *whilst you slight the Sacrament, you slight those Blessings which hereby are represented, and assured to Believers.* You your selves would judge by others in Cases like this. If the King should proclaim, that he will give Estates in some of his Plantations to all that will come to the Court, and take Patents from him, and subscribe their Names to a Bond, which only ties them to acknowledge they had their Estates from his Bounty, and to live there according to his Laws. Is it not a sign, that they who will not do thus much, do very little care for the Estates that are offered them? And do not they manifest as little regard of Heaven it self, and all the Promises of the Gospel, who are loath to be at so much pains as to go to the Sacrament, there to have all these confirmed to them? being unwilling to bind themselves hereby to Thankfulness and Obedience to that God, who makes them such large and bounteous Offers. He that refuseth a cheap and easy Medicine, which being duly taken may recover him

from

from his Sickness, may well be said to undervalue his Health. Thus it is too apparent, that thou little regard-est the Health of thy Soul, whilst thou slightest those Means, which, through the Blessing of the great Physician upon the careful use of them, might tend so much to thy healing and strengthening. If a Shilling be offered me in Earnest of a Thousand Pounds to be given upon some certain Conditions, if I refuse to take it, it is not so much the Earnest as the greater Sum that I thereby reject. Thus Heaven is assured to thee upon Condition of thy Faith and Obedience, and if thou likest it upon these Terms, the Sacrament shall be given thee in Earnest; but if thou wilt not take the Earnest, thou seem'st to put away from thee Everlasting Life. If a condemned Man tear in pieces the King's Pardon which is brought to him, his Fault is not so much the tearing of a piece of Paper, as his Contempt of the Pardon. Thus shall it be laid to thy charge, not meerly the despising a bit of Bread and a sup of Wine, but thy slighting all those rich and unvaluable Blessings, which hereby were offer'd and assur'd to Believers. If indeed thou prizest these, shew it by thy setting a due esteem upon that which hath so near a relation to them; but if thou value them not, think not much if thou go without them for ever: For whom canst thou blame, if thou miss of these Things, which thou carest not for?

4. *Is not this Neglect a sad sign that thou performest no Duty as thou oughtest, nor to those Ends thou shouldest? For if thou did'st rightly improve any, why should'st thou not be glad of all? Art thou not ready to try all courses, and use all means for the continuance and increase of thy outward Welfare? And yet thou thinkest every thing too much that's enjoined thee for thy Spiritual Advantage, and therefore comest not to this Ordinance, as thinking thou may'st do well enough without it. They that are in Health use not to say, if they have one sort of Food, what shall they do with another? Or if they eat one Meal in a day, why need they eat another? and yet*

yet this is thy Language in reference to thy Soul. So long as thou hast been Baptized, and comest to Church, and say'st thy Prayers, (and it's well if thou do thus much) why may not this serve thy turn without coming to the Sacrament? Why tell me, pray thee, what's thy design in these Duties? Is it to get Good to thy Soul, that thou may'st grow in Grace, and get fitter for Glory? If it be, why then is not every Duty acceptable to thee, which would help on this design? But is it not rather to be fear'd, that these are done out of Custom, without expecting, and therefore without finding any great Advantage from them? And because the neglect of that Duty I am urging thee to is too common, and so no great matter of Disgrace, therefore thou makest so light of it. And withall, perhaps there is somewhat more Pains requisite to prepare thee for it, and therefore out of meer Sloth and Laziness thou holdest off. Oh that thou wast but set in as good earnest to enrich thy Soul with Grace, as the most of Men, and its like thou thy self art, to grow rich in the World! How many ways will they wind and turn to get a little Gain? If one course will not serve they'll take another; and if that fail, they'll try a third; what they miss in one bargain, they'll seek to make amends for in the next. Thus would it be with thee, wast thou a diligent Christian: Thou would'st turn every stone, seek every corner for the Pearl of Price. Didst thou once by experience know the worth and excellency of true Grace, and the satisfying sweetness of conversing with God, thou would'st be very diligent in the use of all those Means whereby these Advantages are to be attained: What thou had'st got at one Duty, would prompt thee to another, in hopes to find the like; or if thou hast mist of thy hopes in one, it will put thee upon another, there to get satisfaction. If thou found'st thy self at a distance from God, or under fears of his Displeasure, thou would'st never be at rest with thy self till thou hadst found him whom thy Soul loved, and had'st got a renewed sense of his Love to thy Soul:



Soul : In all those ways wherein he gives a comfortable meeting to his People, wouldst thou give constant attendance, ever earnestly waiting for the gracious and comfortable manifestations of himself in thy Soul. But since thou canst so contentedly miss one Priviledge, and that of so great importance, it's a shrewd sign that thou improvest not any as thou oughtest ; and what a wretched barren case then must thy Soul needs be in ?

5. Consider *What a shame it is that thou shouldst be thus regardless for the provision made for thy Soul, whilst thou art so greedy and forward after any thing that makes for the gratifying of thy Flesh.* Generally in the World Men refuse no pains to supply their bodily necessities, and yet when here is Food provided to their Hands, they have no mind to it, because this is only suited to their Souls. How eagerly can they hunt after that which they are never like to obtain, or which, if they do, will never satisfy and fill them, whilst they put away from them the savoury Meat which God hath brought to them ; which would be savoury if their taste was not spoiled. Whilst *Manna* is loathed that falls before the Tent-door, how do they long after the *Garlick*, and *Onions*, and *Flesh pots of Egypt* ! May not I justly say that the *Table of Devils* is more frequented than the *Table of the Lord* ? Though Men now adays do not offer Sacrifices to Devils, as those Idolaters did, of whom the Apostle speaks, yet do they not sacrifice to their own Lusts ? And is not this as acceptable service to the Devil, and as provoking to God ? And do they not maintain a Fellowship with Devils, whilst their Nature is so conformable, and their Lives so subject to them ? Such are all *twinish Epicures*, who serve their own Belly rather than the Lord Jesus. Oh what multitudes have we got of such voluptuous ones, who had rather bring Sicknes upon their Bodies, and Damnation upon their Souls, by pleasing their greedy unatiable Throat, than come to refresh and strengthen themselves with such Food, as through the Spirit of Life accompanying it, will preserve both Soul and Body to everlasting

lasting Life. *Wisdom* in vain sends forth her Embassadors, to stand in the highest places of the City to call Passengers to the Banquet she has made, whilst the destroyer of Souls is hearkened to, calling them off from the right way, telling them, *that stolen waters are sweet, and Bread eaten in secret is pleasant*: And with these unlawful Pleasures do foolish Sinners glut themselves, not remembering that he doth but feed them for the slaughter, and that *his guests are in the depths of Hell*, Prov. 9. Oh how will this aggravate the condemnation of the prophane in our days, that whilst they could not be kept out of the Alehouse and Tavern, but lay there day and night, drinking away their Wit, their Money, and oftentimes their Life it self, yet no entreaties could bring them duly to prepare themselves, and come to eat and drink at the Lord's own Table. Hadst thou but such a Favour offered thee as *Haman*, to be entertained at a Banquet with the King and Queen, how forwardly would'st thou accept it, and with what Pride would'st thou boast of it, as he did? But yet when the King of Glory invites thee to be his Guest, thou thinkest not his invitations worth hearkening to, to mean are thy Thoughts of his Company and Fare. Yea, dost thou not see how importunate Beggars are for an Alms? They come to thy Door, and stand begging for Bread, and will hardly be driven away empty: And yet when thou art thus begged to accept Bread that comes from Heaven, thou wilt not receive it. Here Men must be *compell'd*, that is, importunately woo'd to come in, and yet they will not be prevailed with: Or if they do come, it is oftentimes in such a careless manner, that gives as much Displeasure to him who sent for them, and brings as much Mischief upon themselves as if they had stay'd away. But of this I spake in the beginning, wherefore I shall only add, that it is to me a matter of astonishment, that those who know their Bodies will shortly be in the Grave, and who say they verily believe their Souls must live for ever, that those very Men should with so much care and unweariness feed and main-

tain their Bodies, whilst willingly and out of meer sloth, they suffer their Immortal Souls to starve and perish eternally.

6. Consider, *This is a juncture of time wherein especially thou art engaged to do all that in thee lyes toward the speedy securing of thy Everlasting Happiness;* and therefore in the most solemn manner, to consecrate thy self to God at the Sacrament, there renouncing all thy ways of Wickedness whereby thou hast provoked him, that so thy Peace may be made with him. For consider how he hath lately appeared in Judgment against us, and shewn that he hath a sore Contro-

*This was written soon after the great Plague in 1665, the First Edition being Printed in 1666.*

versie with us: And shall not we, the surviving Inhabitants of the Land, learn Righteousness hereby? Shall not we be so wise as to meet him in the way, before his Anger be kindled against us in particular? It is to be feared, the neglect of this very Duty, and the gross Miscarriages in the manner of performing it, have done much toward the hastening of those Judgments we have laid under. And shall not this teach thee what to do for the future? Wilt thou go on to provoke the Lord to jealousy? So that his Anger should not be turned away, but his Hand stretched out still. And if thou art one, who hast lately been preserved from the very Graves mouth, whereinto thou wast ready to fall, being in continual expectation of Death through the *Visitation*, or any other Distemper, I would wish thee to look back, and consider what were the Thoughts of thy Heart at that time; thou, I mean, who hast lived a loose and careless Life? Did not thy Conscience fly in thy Face for all thy Wickedness? And didst thou not resolve, that if God should spare thee, thou wouldst become a new Man, and lead another kind of Life than thou hast done? Did it not terrifie thee to remember how thou hast neglected praying, hearing, and receiving Sacraments? And didst thou not make Promises within thy self, that, if God would try thee once again,



again, it should be no more thus? But that thou wouldst be as diligent and constant therein for the time to come, as thou hast been slack and negligent before. Well, now God hath tried thee according to thy desire: thou who mightst have been sent to the place where Repentance will do no good, art yet kept upon Earth, to see what will be the Fruit of thy Afflictions, where yet thou art within the reach of Mercy, if thou throw not thy self out of it. What then shall become of all thy good Purposes and Promises? Are they gone as soon as thy Sicknels and Pain are gone? Are they all forgotten already? Yet be thou sure God will remember them: And said would I perswade thee to remember them too; and now in particular, having prepared thy Soul to address thy self to come to the Lord's Table, and there renew all those Vows and Resolutions which thou madest in the time of Sicknels and Danger; and humbly implore Mercy and Pardon for thy former Carelessness, and all thy Transgressions, and Help from God to walk more closely with him for the future. Let me now in season be thy Remembrancer from the Lord, and bring to mind what Engagements thou hast made to him, and see thou be faithful to them; but if they be slighted, and all that I have said to thee be slighted, because now thou art lusty and well, and seest no Death near thee, and hast something else to do than to trouble thy self with being so Religious, as dying Men use to be, yet let it sink into thy Thoughts that there is just such another time coming upon thee; very shortly thou wilt be sick again, and cast upon thy Death-bed, and dost thou not think the very same Thoughts will then come into thy Mind again? When thou shalt consider thy self just lanching forth into Eternity, and shalt look back upon all thy ungodly Deeds, and thy undervaluing the Means of Grace, by an improvement of which thou mightest have been made ready for such an hour as this, wilt thou not then begin again to fall to wishing that it had been otherwise, and to purposing thou wilt be better hereafter, if once again thou

thou may'st be recovered? But when thy Conscience, with a redoubled fury, shall rise up and bid thee remember, how thou did'st long ago, in the same Condition, seem as penitent as this comes to, but yet all came to nothing, and that therefore thou hast no reason to expect a farther Tryal; and shall moreover tell thee, that it is most likely all this is out of meer slavish Fear, and not out of any true Love to God and Holiness; how wilt thou be able to hold up under such a dreadful Charge as this from thy own awaken'd Conscience? It is my great desire to prevent thy being then overwhelmed with such Thoughts as these; and if *thou* art but as willing, they may effectually be prevented, even by speedily setting upon such a course, as will be the rejoycing of thy Soul at that day, when nothing else will rejoyce thee, but the *Testimony of God's Spirit witnessing with thy Conscience, that by the Grace of God thou hast had thy Conversation in simplicity and Godly sincerity.* For without this it would be but a poor refuge for thee, to call for a Sacrament on thy Death-bed, who didst slight it in thy Health.

7. Consider, *Whether by this Contempt of the Ordinances of Christ, thou may'st not provoke him justly to withdraw them from us, and to bestow them upon a People that will more prize, and frequent, and better improve them, than we have done.* If Children be so indifferent to their Food, that they play with it, or throw it away, it's fit it should be taken from them. When People are warren and curious, that they know not how to be pleased, but upon the least dislike reject their Spiritual Food, it's a sign they want the best of Sauces, a good Stomach, which it's just they should be brought so by being kept short. Or if they be so lazy, that they think it more ado, than needs to be diligent in those Exercises of Religion, which our Lord hath appointed, and take the greatest Privileges for burdens, is it not just they should be eased of them; for who will continue Kindnesses to those who take them for Injuries? Yea, can they expect any other, than ere long to be removed into a World, where they shall

shall never more be troubled with such heavy Impositions? You that are now ready to say what a stir's here with Sermons, Prayers, and Sacraments? and think all your Time lost that's spent in them, and are vexed to think, that you must have so many Interruptions from your Sins or Worldly Business? Be content a while, and you shall have no cause long to complain of these things you now judge so grievous. There's none of this ado in the Hell your Ungodliness leads to; but whether there be not sadder things there, your Experience ere long is like to give you full Conviction, if nothing sooner will convince you. Do but judge reasonably; must it not needs be an high displeasure to God, to see his Creatures condemn the most precious Mercies, as if they were nothing worth? How would you take it, if when out of Courtesie you had invited a poor Man to your Table, and had made ready the best that could be had for him, he should find fault with your Meat, and ask you why you troubled him to come from home to such a poor Dinner as this? Would you think he deserved to have the worst bit there? If your Landlord, or any rich Neighbour, should bid you to a Feast, would you send word by his Servant, that he had nothing worth coming for, but that you could provide for your self better at home? Or if you should send such word, do you think you should be invited twice? And yet thus sawcy and unthankful have you been toward the great God, whilst you have kept away from his Table; notwithstanding which, he hath again and again sent forth his Servants to invite you thither; in that way and to those ends which he hath revealed. But, oh Sirs, do no more so foolishly, so impudently, I beseech you, lest at length you should move God to withdraw from you the Mercies you trample on, and you, when it is too late, should be put to seek with Tears those Blessings which once you cared not for, and therefore must never have.

8. *Is it not a very great sign, that you forget Christ himself, whilst you can thus quietly pass from Year to*

Year



Year without remembering him at the Sacrament? Could you possibly do thus if you bore him upon your Minds, and were sensibly affected with the frequent thoughts of all his Love towards you? Would you not then take all Opportunities to express this your thankful sense of his Kindness? The Children of *Israel*, we read, were enjoined to keep the Feast of the Passover, as a Memorial of their Deliverance out of *Egypt*; and, if when they were come into *Canaan*, they should after a few Years have left it off, might not God justly have tax'd them with forgetting their Deliverance it self? And is not the Case much what the same here? So we find, *Exod. 12. 25, 27.* that when their Children should see them keeping this Feast, and ask what the meaning was, they were to answer, *It is the Sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the Houses of the Children of Israel in Egypt, in that night after he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our Houses.* If now these Children, when they were of Capacity, should refuse to keep this Feast, as they were commanded, is it not a sign that either they believed not what their Parents told them, or else thought there was nothing in it worth the remembrance? Thus if any of you should demand what's the meaning of our assembling together at certain times, to eat and drink Bread and Wine in so serious a manner, it may be answered to you, *This is the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which he appointed in the Night wherein he was betrayed, for a Memorial of that Death, whereby he destroyed the Kingdom of Satan, and delivered his People.* If you now take this to be true, and think it deserves any solemn Remembrance, come as you have been directed, and join with the rest in this Work; if you refuse this, you can never sure have the face to say, that you do in your Hearts remember Christ. If one that had bestowed some great matters upon the Town he lived in, should order at his Death, that the Inhabitants of that Town should, upon a certain Day in the Year, meet together at a Feast, to keep up the Memory of his Bounty; if they neglected this,

this, might it not well be said they forgot their Benefactor? And does not your neglect of this Sacramental Feast, as plainly shew a forgetfulness of your great Benefactor who ordained it? Oh wonderful! that ever Men who have heard, who Jesus Christ is, and what he hath done, should be thus unmindful of him. Ah Sirs, read the History of his Life, think soundly of his Death, and consider then, whether he thus deserves to be forgotten by you. Had he had no more thought of us, where had we now been, and what had become of us for ever? Hath he done so much for you, even without your seeking, and when he requires so little of you, is he denied? If but a dying Friend should take his Ring off his Finger, and put it on yours, and bid you look on that Ring, and remember him, should you not easily do it? But much more, if this Friend had upon any account given up himself to dye for your Preservation, and should only engage you by remembering him, to beware of that Fault whereby your Life was endangered, and his was lost, would not the Memory of such a Friend be ever fresh, and precious with you, if you had any Humanity, any sense of Friendship and Kindness? And would not your Bowels be even turned within you, when ever you beheld this Ring? But alas! how far comes this short of the Kindness which Christ hath shewn to poor Sinners, in many Circumstances, as might easily be shewn? And yet how is all disregarded with the most? How few obey this, that was one of his last Injunctions to his Followers, before he offered up himself on their behalf, that they should feed on his Body and Blood here represented, and remember and love him, who was bruised and poured forth as an Attonement for them, and set themselves against the Sins that occasioned all this. Can Men be guilty of worse Ingratitude?

9. If then Christ be so far from your Thoughts, that you take no pleasure in the Remembrance of him, *Be-think you before-hand how you will be able to look him in the Face, when you will be cited to appear before him whe-*

*ther*

ther you will or not. Be assured, whoever thou art, to whom the Memory of Christ is no ways delightful, to thee his Presence will be most terrible. If thou hast been well pleased to have him as absent from thy Heart, as his Bodily Presence is from the World, thou wilt never know how to abide the Terror of his Appearance, and yet abide it thou must. It will then be with thee just as it was with that wicked Servant whom we read of *Luke* 12. 45, 46. who instead of looking to his Master's Family in his absence, to give them their portion of Meat in due season, as he was commanded, *ver.* 42. thinks within himself, that his Lord delays his coming, and therefore begins to eat and drink, and be drunken, and what follows? *Why the Lord of that Servant will come in a day that he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and appoint his Portion with Hypocrites and Unbelievers.* Even thus may'st thou justly expect it will be with thee, who neglectest to take that portion of Meat for thy Soul which Christ hath provided for thee, and hadst rather pamper thy Flesh, and indulge it in Gluttony and Drunkenness. That very Jesus, whom thou takest no pleasure to remember, and could'st be very well content never to come nearer him, never to behold him, or to have any thing more to do with him, even he shall at length surprize thee by the suddenness of his dreadful Appearance. Though thou would'st not remember him, yet then thou must, thou shalt see him. Though thou could'st cast him out of thy Thoughts, yet thou shalt not be able to avoid his Presence, till he himself shall have utterly banish'd thee from him. Though thou be unmindful of him, yet flatter not thy self with a Conceit that he'll forget this thy unworthy Behaviour: no, but he'll remember it, to recompence it on thy own Head in that day of his Vengeance. As his People may firmly build upon it, that he'll never forget their Labour of Love, so may his Enemies be sure, that he will not forget their Laziness, and Want of Love. Will it not be sad for thee at that day,



*to call upon the Rocks and Mountains to hide thee from his Face, and all in vain? And yet is it not just it should be thus with thee, who art now call'd into Christ's gracious Presence, into the nearest Communion with him, and thou runnest away, and wilfully hidest thy self, and wilt not be perswaded to come in? Alas Man! then expect other Usage from Christ than here thou foundest in the Day of his Patience, whilst he waited to be gracious. He will not come then to offer Pardons to the Guilty, and to beseech their acceptance of them, and of the Sacraments to seal them: No, but he will then only absolve all those who have already got their Pardon, and condemn those who have not: Wherefore if thou thinkest it of any consequence to look Christ in the Face with Comfort at the last Day, now get an Acquaintance with him; put on thy Wedding-Garment of Repentance, Faith, and Love, and come hither to be his Guest: With an humble Boldness come and feast with him, yea, feed upon him, and let him be made familiar to thy Soul, that his coming may fill thee with Joy, and not with Horror.*

10. Lastly, If after all Admonitions and Invitations thou livest in the neglect of this Duty, *dost thou not give us too much ground to fear, that thou art no true Christian?* I know it is not thy coming hither on any fashion that will sufficiently prove thee a good Christian; but yet thy total forbearance may rather make thee suspected to be none at all. For what hast thou to plead on thy own behalf? The greatest Argument of thy Christianity is thy being Baptized: But this was done in thy Infancy, and who knows whether thou stand'st to it or not, if thou wilt not publicly own that thou dost so. If it was the Custom amongst us, that when a Father is lifted into an Army, he should set down the Names of his Sons also, there to stand till they came to Sixteen Years of Age, at which time they were to go in, and write their own Names, or else to be cashier'd: If they when they are come to these Years, should refuse to give

in their Names, do they not hereby shew that they have no mind to be Souldiers? And is it not a question whether thou ownest Christ Jesus for thy Caprain, if thou wilt not make thy appearance with the rest, at times appointed for the acknowledgment of thy Relation to him? If the King should command all that were of Age in a Town, to come to the Market-place, and there take the Oath of Allegiance, if they would be held for good Subjects, how would they be look'd upon, who should stay away and refuse to do it? Now have I not before shewn, how express the Command of Christ is to all his Disciples, that, beside all other Duties, being rightly prepared, they should celebrate this Sacrament in remembrance of him, as an Evidence and Symbol of their Relation to, and Communion with him? How then can we hold them for true Disciples, that reject and slight it? But here give me leave, according to my Promise, to meet with two or three Objections against the Performance of this Duty, before I come to give Directions for it.

## C H A P. XII.

*Sacraments are not to be accounted vain, because  
Externals.*

1. *Obj.* **P**ERhaps then some in the first place may say, *What need have we of such outward Shadows and Ceremonies, so long as we have the Substance, Christ himself, and do truly believe in him? What good can we get by such External Services as these? These are low beggarly Things, not suited to these more Spiritual Times of the Gospel.*

Though I have before said enough to this, yet because there are those who confidently talk at this rate, and are very busie in perverting common People, I shall say something farther by way of Answer to it.

*Answ.* **A**ND first I would demand of you, who is fit to be Judge in this Case, what you ought to do, and what not? Are you Servants, or are you your own Masters? *Came the Word of God forth from you? Was the Christian Religion something of your devising, that you may frame it, and appoint the Duties of it as you shall see best? Or came this Word to you only? Did he who revealed it to the World, privilege you to pick and chuse some Duties, and omit others, as you saw good? If you say yes, pray produce your License, and let us see it; for we find no such thing recorded in that Word, which we all acknowledge to come from God. And if you have got any private Orders contrary thereto, give us sufficient Evidence to prove them of Divine Authority, and then we shall be silent. But till then it must needs be accounted strange Impudence, for silly Worms to quarrel with the Institutions of Infinite Wisdom. For if God's Authority may be regarded, rather than the fond Opinion of proud and giddy Men, we need not be to seek what to do in this matter, Christs having so plain-ly*



ly commanded us, *to do this in Remembrance of him*, as I have before shewed.

2. And since there is such a Command, I wonder how it can be accounted an unprofitable thing to obey it? Is there no Profit in pleasing God? And can we please him any other way, than by obeying his Commands? Let the matter of the Command be what it will, if we know it be given us by God, that's Warrant enough for our Practice, and Ground for our expectation of Benefit by it, though we could not much see the Reason of the Thing in it self abstracted from the Command, (though here the Case is otherwise, as I have also before manifested.)

3. If any should say now we lye under no Obligation to this Duty, let them shew where Christ's Command to his Disciples is repealed, or where there is the least intimation given, that there was a time to come when it should be out of date, and cease to oblige our Consciences. Nay, are we not taught there was no such time to come? For do we not find the reason and end of this Ordinance assigned to be such, as will make it necessary to the last Day? And this is to prevent all Exception plainly exprest; *Hereby you shew forth Christ's Death till he come*, 1 Cor. 11. 26.

4. Do not they who tell us the Sacraments are but Shadows, and therefore now to cease, hereby pretend a new Dispensation of the Gospel, purer and higher than that which was set up by Christ and his Apostles after the ceasing of the Levitical Worship? For long after this, we find Baptism and the Lord's Supper in use. Wherefore if they are now to be laid aside, is it not because that was but an Infant State of the Church, wherein such Ceremonies were requisite, which are now needless, it being grown to greater Maturity, and the Members engaged to be more spiritual, and taken off from those carnal Services, wherein such mean Persons as the Apostles and their Followers were conversant? But do not they notoriously violate the Truth, as well as Modesty,

who tell us this? Do we either in the Old Testament, or New, meet with any Prophecies, that intimate to us a new Dispensation, or different way of ordering the Christian Church, after Christ had fully establish'd it? We find such frequently as to the Jewish Ceremonies, but no where, that I know, relating to any Laws or Orders that Christ hath appointed. And none, I hope, will say our Sacraments were like them, of a Typical nature, and so to cease by the coming in, and accomplishment of somewhat which they signified. Though the first Dispensation under *Moses* was imperfect, yet where are we allowed to find fault with the second introduced by Christ? Is not this Gospel-state the *Kingdom that cannot be moved*, in opposition to the Jewish state of things, which was *shaken and removed*? as we may probably interpret, *Heb. 12. 26, 27.* Wherefore they who would make us believe, that in these latter days the Church is to be reformed, not only from the Corruptions Men brought in, but from the Ordinances which Christ set up, what do they but trouble us, by endeavouring to pervert the Gospel of Christ? approaching too near to those, whom the Apostle so vehemently pronounced accursed, *Gal. 1. 9.* Those indeed would have brought in customs which Christ had abrogated, and these would abrogate such as he hath ordained; and when we remember who ordained them, it may sufficiently awe us from slighting them, though they may seem but lesser matters, and, as it were, appendages to Religion. And it should make all sober Christians the more afraid, of hearkning after any new and more spiritual Dispensations of the Gospel, when we remember the unspeakable Mischief, which this groundless pretence hath done, and may do to the Church. Under this notion the *Fanulists* vent their horrid fancies; and even *Mahomet* himself made use of this pretence, when he first set up in the World: And so any Man that hath a mind to advance some new way, which he can find no ground for in the Gospel, may pretend that it is something higher and more excellent

than

than Christ thought fit at first to reveal, but now in these last days he hath sent him as his Messenger to publish it to the World. And as well may we hearken to any such Imposture as to those who tell us, that though, it's true, Christians at the first were Baptized, and received the Lord's Supper, yet now have nothing to do with these Things, being arrived to a more perfect state than they were acquainted with.

5. How unreasonable is it, that they should oppose those things which so well agree together, and mutually promote each other, whilst they say they believe in Christ, and therefore regard not this piece of outward Service? But I wonder where they find, that Faith in Christ may excuse a Man from receiving the Sacrament. I should think it rather engaged him to it. Far be it from me to press this Duty, as that which will give Men the least Dispensation to neglect any other; nay, I hope I have sufficiently shewed all along, that I press it as a strong Obligation, Morive and Help to Holiness, both of Heart and Life. Hither should Men come purposely to exercise and strengthen their Graces; and therefore it's a most foolish thing to say they have got Grace in their Hearts, and will thereupon stay away. If you believe in Christ, come hither and profess that you do so, for so he hath bidden you to do, and be not so ridiculous as to say, because you have Faith, therefore you will not in this manner profess it. If a King should command all his Subjects, that would go to such a War, to come and set down their Names, and afterwards come and answer to them at a Mustering, would it not be a wise piece of business, for any of them to say, he would fight in the War, and therefore he would not have his Name set down, nor appear with the rest at the times of Mustering? And is it not much what the same for any to pretend they'll keep Covenant with Christ, and therefore will not make or renew it in that solemn manner he hath commanded? What, wilt thou say thou lovest Christ, and art sincerely thankful for his Love,



and therefore wilt not join with thy Fellow-Christians, in the remembrance of his Mercy and expreffion of thy Gratitude? Does this sound like Reason? And yet no better is to be found in thy Objection. Might not the Apostles far better have said, they needed not the Help of this Sacrament, to put them in mind of Christ, who was ever fresh in their Thoughts? But on the contrary, because he was so much in their Thoughts, therefore they were so frequent in this Duty. And was thy Spirit like theirs, thy Practice would not be so contrary. And let me tell thee farther, its much to be feared, thou hast little or no Grace at all, who slightest any way that Christ hath ordained, for the increafe of Grace. A wise Man useth not to say, I enjoy my Health well, and therefore I care not for my Food, since this is the Means for continuance of his Health. But it seems thou deniest, that thou canst get any Good by this Ordinance, wherefore,

6. In the next place let me ask thee, Dost thou imagine thy self arrived to the utmost pitch of Perfection, so that thou lookest upon all Means and Ordinances as Things below thee? If so, I cannot now stand to shew thee the Pride and Ignorance of this Conceit, which are both so great, that it's Danger thou wilt not be convinced of either. But wast thou indeed so excellent a Creature as thou takest thy self to be, yet methinks thou shouldst not imagine, that thou art above the exercise of Grace, or returning Thanks for what thou hast received, and even these Reasons may bring thee to the Duty I am now pleading for. Or if this be none of thy Conceit, dost thou imagine that the Soul can get no Good by external Means, which work upon the Senses? If this be thy Opinion, thou seemest not to consider the Nature and Frame of Man in this present State, wherein Bodily Things do so mightily affect him, and he is beholden to his Senses for all, or almost all the Knowledge which he hath. By this reason Men could profit nothing by reading or hearing, which is so contrary to all Experience.

rience. And by this reason in the time of the Law no good was to be got by those Ceremonies, that typified Christ to come, which is a very bold Assertion, and most unreasonable; and I hope the clearer Representations of him, and his Benefits in our Sacraments, have much the Advantage of those darker Shadows.

7. Is it not very great Impudence and Ingratitude, when Christ hath chosen to deal with us in such a sensible manner as he saw most suitable to our Natures, for us thereupon to call his Wisdom and Goodness in question? When he calls us to offer our Bodies, as well as Souls to him, and to glorifie him both with Soul and Body, shall we say he cares not for Bodily Service, and thereupon neglect all those Services, wherein the Body is employed? And when he out of Indulgence to our Weakness, hath provided external Helps meet for us, shall we think our selves too high for them? Is not this most vile Pride and Ingratitude? And consider whatever we dare to speak in Disparagement of Christ's Ordinances, as if they were empty useless things, will be found to reflect foully upon the Honour of Christ himself the Law-giver.

8. Where do we find any of the pious *Jews* before Christ's time, complaining of their Ceremonies as burdensome, unprofitable things? Afterwards indeed, when they were maintained in opposition to Christ, whom they led to, and ended in, they are call'd *beggarly Elements*, and carnal Ordinances; but we hear not of this Language before. Tho' then God frequently express'd this very little regard to them, compared to the more substantial Duties of the Moral Law, yet where read we that any of the Godly of those Days rejected or disused them? And what, is our Bondage sorer than theirs? Hath Christ put a yoke upon his Disciples heavier than he took off? And what do they better than say thus, who throw off his gracious Institutions, as a burden too heavy for them to bear?

9. Methinks this is so like the Language of Infidels, that all who have any mind to be thought Christians, should abhor it. What wonder would it be for an Infidel to laugh at Baptism, or the Lord's Supper, if he should see them administered, and ask what Good was to be got with washing with Water, or receiving a little Bread and Wine? But for one who pretends to own the Authority of Christ, to speak after the same manner, seems something strange. If God give a Command to wash in *Jordan* for the Cure of a Leprosie, it beseems none but a Heathen *Naaman*, to ask whether *Abana* and *Pharphar*, Rivers of *Damascus*, are not as good as the Waters of *Israel*. And he discovers little more Religion, who shall saucily demand, why Bread and Wine at his own Table will not do his Soul as much good, as at the Sacrament.

10. I would fain know of these Men, whether Christ had power to appoint an Ordinance of this kind, to the use of which, Christians in all succeeding Generations should be oblig'd? If they grant he had, as I suppose they dare not deny it, then let them say what he should have said or done more to lay this Obligation upon them, than he hath done in the present case. If again they find fault with the nature of this Ordinance, as if it was not suited to be perpetual, because of its unprofitableness, let them tell when it begun to be so. Was it from the first Institution? Or after a certain time? If from the beginning, what was it ordained for? Why would Christ set up an Ordinance that was good for nothing? And why were the Disciples so frequent in it? If afterwards, let them name the time, and give the reason of its degeneracy. But farther, was Christ able to make this Sacrament profitable to those, who should conscientiously attend upon it? They who say it was not, must not take it ill to be thought Infidels: But if they yield he was, then let them alledge some reason why he would not, or rather let them shew wherein he hath been wanting to it, to make it so profitable: If these Fault-finders might



might have been at the first appointment hereof, what a kind of one would they have it, that it might have been more useful than now they judge it is? Is not the Death of Christ here set out before our Eyes? And may not that in some sort affect us, supposing we know the Design of it, as well as Discourses that reach our Ears? May not this awake us to lively Thoughts of Christ, of the reason and ends of his Death, and so quicken us to the exercise of Repentance and Faith, and stir us up to desire after him, and to Thankfulness for his Love? And when our Souls are wrought into so good a Frame, may we not reasonably expect larger Communications of Grace from that overflowing Fountain of Goodness, who requires nothing more than a right disposition in us that we may be made partakers of his Bounty? Not to mention how fit a way this is, for the conferring a right to, and giving assurance of relative and future Privileges.

11. Besides the Example of those in the first Ages of the Church, methinks the daily Experience of the generality of sober Christians may abundantly confute this conceit, that there is no good to be got by frequenting the Lord's Table; were these demanded one by one whether they had not found the contrary, I believe the most of them would profess they had; tho' through their own fault they would acknowledge, they had not hereby profited so much as they might. How many poor Souls have come in hither heavy and dull, and have gone away enlivened? How many have come dejected and sad, and gone away refresh'd and chear'd, and have long after enjoyed the benefit of this Duty? But if they who make this Objection, never found any such thing, it would speak more modesty and justice too, to lay the blame on themselves, rather than on the means which Christ hath afforded them.

12. Lastly, I would desire all that are impartial, to consider, how plainly God hath witness'd against this sort of Men, who are the chief Patrons of that Opinion

I oppose, in suffering them to be so infatuated and be-  
 sorted in their own Minds; that, whilst they have im-  
 pudently dar'd to reject the Ordinances of Christ as  
 needless things, they themselves have doted upon the  
 most ridiculous inconsiderable Trifles, as if they were  
 matters of some huge consequence. Have not those ve-  
 ry Men, who cry down the Lord's Supper and Baptism,  
 of one sort or other, beside many other Duties, as for-  
 mal things, yet with a great deal of earnestness call'd  
 upon us to say, *thou* rather than *you*, to a single Person,  
 not to call Men *Master*, nor to put off our Hats one to  
 another, with a multitude of the like Fopperies? These  
 it seems are substantial things which they have devised,  
 whilst Christ's own appointments are empty and carnal.  
 What's this but a Mark set upon them, ( and few Sects  
 are without one ) to let the World know they came not  
 from God, that none who are considerative might be en-  
 dangered by their Delusions? And let this suffice for An-  
 swer to the Objection; whereon I have been the lar-  
 ger, in that it is of such ill consequence, and hath too far  
 spread it self amongst giddy untable People.

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## C H A P. XIII.

*Against too seldom communicating in the Sacrament.*

2. *Obj.* **I**N the next place some may say, *We have already received the Sacrament, and so have satisfied the Command of Christ, and therefore may be excused from it for the future.*

I should scarce have dream'd of such an Objection, had I not heard it us'd. But to dispatch it in two Words.

1. I have before acknowledg'd, that Christ hath not told us how frequently, or how oft in our Lives we must perform this Duty, but yet we may learn from the Words of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 11. 25. that it is to be done more than once: For saith he, *As often as you eat, &c. i. e. every time that you eat.* And then I have shew'd you what was the Practice of the first Christians, which may well hold the place of a Rule in this case. Wherefore you ought to obey the Injunction of your Pastor, so oft as he shall in prudence think meet to call you to the Lord's Table, since you have so much reason for Obedience, and none to alledge for your refusal.

2. And in the next place, pray tell me, had you any reason for this Duty when you first perform'd it? You'll scarce say no, I suppose; and if you had any, then I ask, whether the same Reason does not still continue? If it does, why should not your Practice be continued agreeably thereto? Have you not still some necessities of Soul which may here be supplied, as well as you had then? Is not the Death of Christ as well worthy your Remembrance now as formerly? And if you heretofore received any Advantage by what you did, methinks you should be more inclin'd to hold on therein. But here perhaps some may reply, putting the Objection in another shape, that they have often attended on this Ordinance, and yet have found no Advantage by it, and therefore being out of



of heart and hope, are ready to throw it quite off. To whom I answer.

1. If it be thus indeed, you have great reason to acknowledge the Fault is your own. Either you have not been so diligent in your preparations as you ought, or else you have been careless afterward, thinking you had done when the work was over, as if no more was required to make a Sacrament strengthening to your Souls, than to make Food nourishing to your Bodies, barely to receive it, and there's an end; when as there is a serious Consideration of what you have done, and a constant watchfulness afterwards, necessary to make it beneficial to you, as I may have occasion to shew anon. And especially see if you give no kind of Allowance to some pleasant Sin or other, which you are hardly willing to be quite delivered from; such a secret partial cherishing of any Lust whatever, will be sure to keep you low and barren, and render all Means unprofitable. And thus it is also like to be with you, if you are swallowed up in Worldly Business, or do too sweetly relish any sensible Enjoyment.

2. You who complain you can get nothing by Sacraments, will say the same, I suppose, by other Means and Duties; and will you therefore cast off these too? Will you lay aside hearing and praying upon this pretence? You may as well: For the reason holds as good for one as the other.

3. But farther, I would have you beware of mistaking your selves, imagining that you Profit not when you do. And therefore consider what your Expectations have been, and what you have found. Perhaps you have expected great Joys, and as it were, sensible Assurances of God's Love, and to be afterward freed from all Troubles and Doubtings: Or you have expected a perfect freedom from some Trouble, some Temptations where-with you use to be haunted, and from the very first motions of Sin in your selves; and because you have found none of this in those measures you look'd for, therefore you

you conclude you have met with nothing. But this is no right arguing : For these are Priviledges that you may go without all your days, and yet thrive under the Means too ; and therefore by them you cannot judge of your profiting : But if you can find the strength of Sin broken, and your Heart more set against it, and you are more thoroughly perswaded to comply with the whole Will of God, being firmly resolved to keep close to him to the last, discovering more and more the emptiness of all Creatures, and his All-sufficiency, being more prevalently and steadily bent to chuse him as your only Portion ; if it be so, you may be sure you grow in Grace, and are better by the Means you enjoy, and may be therefore encouraged to continue in the use of them.

4. But lastly, however it be with you, yet be you patient and constant in doing your Work, and then leave the Event to God. Wherein upon Examination you find you have been wanting to your selves, be more careful for the future, in the due preparing and managing of our own Hearts, and so wait upon God in his appointed way. Let your desires be carried out after that which is most needful for you, and which God hath promised to give, chiefly after Grace, and secondarily after Comfort, remembring all you have is to come from the free Mercy of a wise God, to whom you must refer it, what measures of these you shall receive, and how soon it shall be. Only, I say, let it be your business quietly to wait his leisure, in the use of those Means he hath prescribed you, for which I might give many Reasons : But I shall wave all, only demanding of you, whether those Spiritual Blessings you so earnestly long after are worth the waiting for ? If you say no, you deserve to go for ever without them : But if you grant they are, then pray tell me, whether it is more likely to attain them by waiting in that way wherein they are to be found, or by turning out of it ? This, I hope, is no difficult Case to resolve. If your Friend be gone a Journey, and you have a mind to meet him upon his return, are you not  
more

more likely to meet with him, by holding on still in that Road which he'll be sure to come, than by going back again, or turning to some by-path, meerly to gratifie your Laziness or Impatience? Wherefore when your Hopes are at the lowest ebb, it is most unreasonable and foolish, to cry with that wicked King, *Why should we wait on the Lord any longer? There is no hope, wherefore let us leave our Duties, and cast aside all.* Be sure there is no hope in such a course as this, but rather a certainty of perishing, whereas if there be safety in any way, it is in an obedient patient dependance upon God; yea, in this way there is certain safety; embrace it therefore as your wisest, your only course. Do but see that you wait for the Lord, and assure your selves *you shall not be ashamed, your Eyes shall not always fail.* Get into the Psalmist's frame, Psalm 130. 5, 6. *To wait for the Lord more than they that watch for the Morning,* and at length shall the Lord manifest himself to the Joy of your Souls, as sure as the Morning Light will appear to those who watch for it.

# C H A P.

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## C H A P. XIV.

*The Objection of Unfitness answered; as proposed by the Doubting and the Careless.*

3. *Obj.* **S**OME again there are, and those not a few, that will be ready to say, *They find themselves unfit for the Sacrament, and therefore dare not come lest it prove to their Hurt, rather than to their Advantage.* Several sorts of Persons may upon different grounds raise this Objection. First, the sincere and humble Christian, whose Soul is in the dark, and through Ignorance of himself, or not considering the Tenour of the Covenant, and through the prevalency of Temptation, or Melancholy, he may without Reason condemn himself, as if his Estate was worse than it is. To these I have something to say.

1. Why is it you judge your selves unfit for this Ordinance? Is it because you are not so qualified as I have before shewn all Communicants ought to be? I am confident, upon a true enquiry, you will find the contrary: Wherefore be not hasty and rash in passing a Censure upon your selves, as if you were resolved to comply with the design of Satan to keep you in sorrow, but examine Things soberly, and without Passion, and then give Judgment upon your state according to true Evidence. If you be found faithful Disciples, and unfeigned lovers of Christ, you will grant your selves meet to come to that Feast which is made for such. Tell me then in one word; are you not from your very Souls, willing that Christ should be your Saviour, and take his own course with you, to bring you to God in Glory? Is there any thing in all the World that your Heart is set more upon than this, even that you may be saved by Jesus Christ? Would you not account the assurance of this a richer Mercy, than to be made Owners of the whole World?

Yea, would you not give a thousand such Worlds as this, if you had them, for the Love of God in Christ? Is not this it which lies heaviest upon your Spirits, and makes you walk so sadly, even the tears lest you are without true Grace, and should go without God and Christ for ever? And yet can the Devil so beset you, as to perswade you all this while that you love not God? Have you got any thing here below more dear to you than this Favour? Do you take delight in any course that you know is displeasing to him? Do you not long to be made more conformable to him? To know and love, and enjoy him more, and do him better Service in the World? Would it not be the great Joy of your Souls always to walk closely with him, and retain a strong sense of his Presence, and all his Excellencies upon your Minds? To converse with him more feelingly and powerfully, and in all your Approaches to him, to be filled with a suitable Reverence, Humility, Seriousness, and all holy Affections? Would any thing please you more than to please your God? Are you not then best at ease when you find your Hearts most enlarged, and carried out after him? Had you not rather be following after God in the Ways of Holiness, and the Duties of Religion, than to enjoy all the Pleasures and Merriments of sensual ones? Is there any Duty from which you would be dispensed with? Any Command that you would have abolished? Had you not infinitely rather your Heart was brought up to the fullest compliance with it? Have you any Lust which you would fain be allowed to keep? Is it a trouble to you, that you must part with your Sins, or else be damned for them? Or rather, Is it not your greater Trouble, that you lived so long without God, and did so much against him in the days of your Unregeneracy? And if you had that Time to pass over again, would you not prefer a Life of the greatest Suffering before such a Life of Sinning? And is not your Soul really burdened with those remnants of Corruptions which you yet feel in your selves? Do you not strive against them

and earnestly desire to be rid of them? Would you not account it a blessed Priviledge, to be more free from Ignorance, Pride, Earthliness, Distrust, Self-will, Dulness, and Distraction in holy Duties? Would not a Deliverance from these be more welcome, than to be freed from any outward Afflictions you may lye under? All you that are sincere (and to such only I am now speaking) cannot but acknowledge that the Frame of your Souls is such as I have been enquiring after, how harshly soever you may conclude of your selves notwithstanding. And if such as you, that love God and Holiness, hate Sin, and are humbled for it, have not Right to the Promises of Mercy through Christ, I wonder who have? Why therefore will you not come to receive the Seal to those Promises which do so evidently belong to you or none? But after all, perhaps you'll cry, you cannot believe, and therefore dare not come hither, since this is a Sacrament provided for *Believers* only.

This Objection, I suppose, ariseth principally from your Mistake of the nature of saving Faith. Wherefore tell me, I pray, what do you mean when you say, you cannot believe? Do you not really believe, that the witness which the Scripture gives of Christ is true? What ever Temptations you may have to Infidelity, yet is not this the prevalent perswasion of your Minds, that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, by whom the fallen World is to be recovered out of its Ruins? Do you not believe him furnish'd with full Power and Authority to accomplish his Design? Do you not believe that his Death was sufficient for the Ransom of the World, and all other Truths concerning him that you find revealed in the Gospel? And then are you not resolved that this Jesus shall be your Saviour, and none but he? Do you not from your Hearts acknowledge your selves miserable lost Creatures, altogether unable to restore your selves, or to do any thing that may satisfy God's Justice, or in it self deserve Recompence or Acceptance? So that you are convinc'd, if ever you are sav'd, it must be through



Christ; and are you not earnestly desirous of this above all Things, that God for his Son's sake would pardon and save you? Yea, more than that, are you not sincerely willing that Christ should rule in your Hearts, and guide you by his Spirit, and frame you according to his Will? Do you not account his Commands holy, just and good? And do you not desire Strength from him your Head to obey them, and to conquer all Temptations from within and without, that would draw you aside? Do you not believe the Promises which he hath made, and the Threatnings which he hath denounc'd to be certainly true? And do you not desire more, that you may have a Share in these Promises, than enjoy any created good? And do you not fear his threatned Wrath, more than any outward Sufferings? Is it thus with you, as I am confident it is, and yet will you cry out that you cannot believe? What can you not believe? Why, alas! you cannot believe you shall ever be sav'd by Jesus Christ. Is that it then which your Belief only sticks at? But suppose it does, you are not therefore presently Unbelievers in Scripture stile, or in God's account. For this is not that which is so much press'd upon you: Observe well the language of the Gospel, which runs thus, *Believe in Christ, and you shall be saved, not believe that thou shalt be saved by Christ.* This absolute perswasion of thy own Salvation is not so much enjoined thee, how ever not in the first place, but rather thy acceptance of Christ, that thou may'st be saved by him. And yet, methinks, if thou weigh things well, thou may'st be rais'd to such well grounded hopes of thy own particular Happiness, as may very much conquer these Doubtings and Fears, which thou complainest of under the name of Unbelief. For let me ask thee seriously, why is it thou canst not believe thou shalt be saved by Christ? Is it not, I know, because thou doubtest of his sufficiency of his Satisfaction, or of the Truth of his Promises, or the graciousness of his Nature? For art thou not fully perswaded, that he will save all those who truly believe in him?

I make no doubt but thou art: Wherefore hence it is plain, that thy fears of perishing arise from an Opinion, that thou art not a true Believer. But this, from thy own acknowledgment, I have made evident, that thou art, whilst thou believest that Christ is the only Saviour of Mankind, and art as willing he should take away thy Sins from thee, as prevent Wrath from falling upon thee. So that it is rather for want of a clear Knowledge of thy self, than for want of Faith in the Promises, that thou canst so hardly believe thou shalt be saved. Wherefore once again I ask thee, art thou not willing that Christ should deliver thee, both from the Dominion and Condemnation of Sin? If thou art, and wilt shew it by using the Means he hath afforded for this end, then be assured, thou art a true Believer, and as such shalt be own'd and crown'd by the Lord that bought thee. And therefore with great alacrity come along with thy Fellows, to the thankful remembrance of that *Eternal Redemption* obtain'd for you by the Blood which ratified the *Everlasting Covenant* betwixt God and his People.

2. Whatever your Weaknesses, Corruptions, Temptations are, let them not detain you from, but rather send you with more speed to this Ordinance: For you know not but that may be the Means which God will bless for the removal of them. And take this for a certain Truth, whilst you have no Sin, but what is the burden of your Souls, and which you labour and long to be freed from, you have no Sin that makes you unfit for the Sacrament: Nay more, this your sense of Sin makes you rightly fitted for it. And then there is less ground of doubt, as to the fears and sadness you may labour under, or any Temptations with which you are troubled: You cannot sure be so weak, as to think your selves upon any of these accounts unfit for your Lord's Table: For you must remember, he never made this the qualification of his Guests, that they should come wanting nothing; but he calls hither the necessitous to supply their Wants. You come not hither only to be thankful for what you

have received, but to receive farther what your Souls stand in need of. You would think he argued at a very silly rate that should tell you, you must not go to a Feast till your Hunger was satisfied, nor come to the Fire, till you are warm: And yet no better is the Sophistry of Satan, whereby he would perswade you, that whilst you feel so many Imperfections cleave to you, and lye under such great Doubtings, you must stay away from the Sacrament; when as this is one Means appointed by God for your relief: Here's both Physick and Food administered to the sick and fainting. And God may take this season of revealing himself to you, and satisfying those Doubts which you could no other way get rid of. Thus hath it been with many a Soul, why may it not be so with you also?

3. Pray tell me, notwithstanding all these Faults which you find with your selves, yet do you not hold on in the performance of other Duties? To instance in one, Do you not use to pray constantly? If you do, why then will you not be brought to this Work also? For assure your selves, if you be such whose Prayers are acceptable to God, your Receiving will be acceptable also. Without a dependance upon Christ the Mediator, and a Resolution to conform your selves to the Will of God, your very Prayers will be bathsome; but if these things be in you, all your Services will be well-pleasing to him. Wherefore beware of pretending so much Reverence for this Ordinance, and so much necessity for Preparation, that lest you should not demean your selves as you ought, you will wholly neglect it: For sure you cannot think this according to your Master's Will, that you should run away from your Work, for fear of murthering in it: Nor pretend that this is of a nature so much different from all other Duties, that whilst you may do them, you may not be admitted to this, since, if you be sincere and hearty in one as well as another, endeavouring to improve them to the end for which they were appointed, even to get nearer to God thereby, be

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sure you shall be accepted in all. Moreover berthink your selves what you would have done, had you liv'd in the first Ages of the Church, when the Christians were wont for the most part, at every time of their assembling, to have a Sacrament. Would you then have ordinarily withdrawn from them? Or would you not rather have contented your selves with that measure of Preparation, that you had then been capable of making? Though think not that I am all this while encouraging you to Laziness, or to rush heedlessly and inconsiderately hereupon: No, be as diligent as ever you are able, to prepare your selves for so near an approach to the great God, but yet be not so over-scrupulous as to keep back from the Ordinance, or make your coming less profitable, through excessive Fears. And remember still, *that the habitual devotedness of the Soul to God expressed in constant Holiness of Life, is the best Qualification for this and every other performance.*

4. Lastly, one would think you of all Persons should not be guilty of refusing your presence here, where there is a Commemoration made of the Love of your dearest Lord. I speak to you that are serious Christians; well may others slight this Duty, if you that lye under so great Engagements to it, will be kept back by any ordinary Pretences. You are such that are somewhat acquainted with the greatness of that Mercy, manifested in the Redemption of the World, and will you be easily detained from shewing forth that Death, which procured it? You are Persons tender of your Master's Honour, and sensible of your own Duty: Show then that you are so, by obeying his Command, and preserving the esteem due to his Sacred Ordinances, by your constant reverent attending upon them.

Others there are, that may complain of their unfitness, who find themselves at a loss in their Preparations for this Duty, which yet they are very willing to set about, and are desirous of Instructions for their right Performance of it. For these, especially, I have

reserved some Directions, to which I shall come presently.

But there are a third sort, those the worst, and, I fear, the most, who will confess they are unfit for the Sacrament, and therefore will by no means be drawn to it, but will tell you, though they are not fit now, yet hereafter they hope they shall be; whilst in the mean time there are no signs of any Preparation they make: For come to them one Month or Year after another, still they are in the same Posture, and use the same Excuses. Now the very plain Case of these Persons, I take to be this; So much knowledge they have, that they are convinc'd no Man ought to come to the Sacrament, who is not firmly resolv'd to forsake his Sins, and to become a new Man, if before he have been a careless liver; and yet their Consciences tell them, that such and such Sins they are guilty of, which they cannot endure to think of parting with, and such and such Duties they believe they ought to set upon, which yet they have no mind to; and therefore so much Modesty they have, that they will not come to bind themselves to that which they are not resolv'd to do; and this while they fancy to themselves that their Case is something better, than if they should go and make Promises of Amendment, and soon after break them; and are apt to conceit, that they may as yet safely take somewhat more Liberty, than will be lawful for them, when once they have taken the Sacrament, whereby they imagine they should be strangely hampered, and tied to a strictness which they have no liking to. But yet hereafter, when they have tasted a little more of the Pleasures of the World, they intend to betake themselves to such a course, and then they'll be constant at Sacraments, and as devout as may be; this they promise to themselves. I dare appeal to the Consciences of many, whether such as these have not been their Thoughts. Reader, have they not been thy own? And commonly it is either Tippling or Wantonness, or love to an idle and jolly Life, and a hollowness

to all pains and diligence in Spiritual Affairs, and a misapprehension of serious Holiness, as if it was a most troublesome rigid thing, that are the ordinary causes of these, and most Mens continuance at a distance from Godliness, and make them so backward to devote themselves entirely to God. Now these I confess are not to be called immediately to the Sacrament, but seriously to be dealt with in order to their recovery, from those sensual Inclinations, and wretched Delusions, which render them so unfit for, and averse from it, to which purpose serve the former Exhortations to Repentance and Faith, whereon I staid so long. Only I shall here discover to them two dangerous Mistakes, wherewith they seem willing to impose upon themselves, and which chiefly hinder the Performance of their Duty.

The first is, a Conceit that they may take some kind of liberty for a loose Conversation, before they have bound themselves to the contrary by the Sacrament, which thereupon they are much more backward to.

Now first I shall grant, that hereby a farther Obligation is laid upon them, to the greatest watchfulness against Sin, and to a faithful discharge of their Duty to God in the whole of their Lives: And the wilful violation of solemn Engagements renders Sin much more heinous: Wherefore it hath been my Care all along to make you understand, that it is not so much the bare Receiving that I would perswade you to, as to get your Souls into a fitness for the Work, and to do it in a right manner. And once again let me warn you, as you love your Souls, not to come hither in love with your Sins, or without Resolutions to turn from every evil way. Be it known to you, *God will be sanctified in those that draw near him,* and will severely punish Irreverence and profane Rudeness, in those that pretend to this solemn Worship and Service, as you may see in that terrible Instance of *Nadab and Abihu, Lev. 10. 1, 2, 3.* And for unworthy Receiving of the Lord's Supper, the Apostle tells the *Corinthians, For this very cause many were weak and sickly*  
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amongst them, and many fall'n asleep; and because they would not judge themselves, therefore God judged them, 1 Cor. v. 30, 31. He's an holy God, and commands all those to be holy, that hope for acceptance in their approaches to him. And he's a God that searches the Heart, so that there's no hope of deceiving him. Wherefore stand off, all you that have design'd to persist one Month or Week longer in your rebellions against the Sovereign Majesty. Dare not to offer so great an Affront to him, as to thrust in among his Subjects, whilst thou art a resolved Traytor, as if thou wouldst make a cryal, whether he could discern thee in that crowd. He's a jealous God, and will not endure to be so tempted; and sooner or later be sure thy Sin shall find thee out. If then thou dislikest the Holy Laws and Government of Christ, take not an Oath in a mockery, that thou wilt be subject to him, which before-hand thou intendest not to keep. Here's no jesting or dallying. Beware how thou playest with edge Tools. These are serious Things; wherefore either be serious and sincere in thy meddling with them, or keep at a distance. Avoid, I say, all you loathsome defiled Sinners, that are in love with your Filth, and will not be washed and cleansed; whilst this is your posture, you are no way fit to sit at the Table of the King of Glory, there to feast with his beloved Friends, whom he hath purified and made meet for his Fellowship and Favour.

But perhaps you'll presently reply, you like all this well enough, this is that you would have, and you agree with me to stay away, as perceiving your own unfitness. And are you indeed resolved to stay away, and to continue in this unprepared posture, as thinking you have hereby some more dispensation for a careless ungodly life than others have? Alas! Poor wretches, how willing you are to be cheated into misery? and how desirous do you seem of a freedom to do your selves the greatest mischief? But a little to undeceive you, let me assure all you that live upon this Earth, and are endued with

with reason, whether you will bind your selves to God by this Sacrament or not ; there lie so many other indispensable engagements on you to his Service, that you have not the least liberty more than others to rebel against him : And that will sufficiently appear, if you do but consider these two things.

1. *The relation wherein you naturally and necessarily stand to God.*

2. *Your more expresse and profest obligation to him.*

For the first, Consider, Are you not his Creatures and he your Maker ? And is not he the upholder of your being, the lengthner of your lives, and the giver of all your mercies ? Is he not therefore your Owner and Governour ? Do you not owe your selves, and all you have, to him ? And is it not your Duty to serve and obey him, whether you have promised you will do so or not ? Do you think he hath no title to you, till in some solemn manner you have profest subjection to him ? Do you think the service you owe to God, is so purely a free will offering, that if you will render it you may, and if not you are in no fault ? By this reason God must be much beholden to you for it. What, do not his Laws bind, till you have given your consent ? Must he ask you leave to govern you ? Do you think it is with you in this case, as with a Servant that owes this Man or that no Duty, till he hath hired himself into his Service ? Sure you cannot be so stupid. But rather will you not yield that from your very birth you are at least as much obliged to Obedience to your Maker, as any Child to his Parent ? And pray tell me, what would you think of that Child, who when his Father bid him do any thing, should stubbornly refuse, and tell him he never promised him any such Obedience ? Would you think this a satisfactory answer ? Do you not easily perceive, that Children are bound to obey their Parents, even by virtue of that relation they stand in to them, though they never enter into any formal engagement to be dutiful ? Even thus do you stand absolutely bound to obey God, the Father

of Spirits, before ever you profess your selves to be his People: And all your professions, though they are as so many farther ties upon you to obedience, yet they give not God any new right to you which before he had not, only hereby you acknowledge his right and promise to render him what is his due. Hence then you may see what an absurd conceit it is, that you may any whit more freely sin against God before you have taken the Sacrament, than after. Can you be so foolish, as to imagine, that such excuses as these will serve your turn at that Day, when you must be called to render a reason of your doing? When the Gospel first came to the Heathens, I hope you'll grant they were bound to receive it, and yet they had never before given their consent to be ruled by Christ, nor had made any Covenant with him. But why stand I so long on a case so plain?

And then take notice farther; That by vertue of this subjection which you owe to God as his Creatures, you are bound to express your resolutions to serve him, by what signs, and in what manner he shall appoint you; now he hath commanded you, to express these resolutions by receiving the Lords Supper, as I have before proved: And will you disobey this particular command, and then think, this will excuse you from Obedience to the rest? To make the case plain by a like instance: Suppose when the King had commanded all his Subjects to repair to several places in the Kingdom, there to take the Oath of Allegiance, many amongst them should absent themselves, and refuse to take it, and afterwards should conspire together, and rise up in arms against him, do you think it would excuse them, to plead that they never swore Allegiance to him? Why first it was their fault that they did not, since they were commanded to do it, and then however they were engaged to Peace and Faithfulness by living in the Kingdom, and receiving protection from their Prince. Even thus will your neglect of Sacraments be charged on you as a fault, for which you had no reason, but will be far from being admitted as an excuse of

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any other sins, against which you were sufficiently tied, by your living meerly upon God, and receiving all you had from him.

But then in the second place consider, *you are already obliged by your own Promises and Professions, to walk in the fear of the Lord,* and therefore have not the least ground to allow your selves in Sin, from your not having received the Lords Supper as an engagement against it. For bethink you a little, do you not profess your selves to be Christians? And what's the meaning of that, but that you worship God by Jesus Christ, and acknowledge him to be your Maker and Ruler, and Christ to be your Saviour? And accordingly, are you not devoted to God by Baptism, whereby you stand bound to renounce the Devil, the World, and the Flesh, and to be Christ's faithful Servants to your lives end? I confess you were thus consecrated to God by your Parents in your infancy, when, according to the Law of God, and Nature, they had full power thus to dispose of you: But now you are come to Years of Discretion, do you consent to what they have done or not? In plain English do you renounce your Baptism, whereby you stand obliged to be the Servants of God and his Son Christ Jesus? You that I am now speaking to, will, I know, deny this with great earnestness, and cry God forbid that you should be such Apostate wretches, from Christians to turn Heathens and Infidels. Well then, if you acknowledge your selves under the bond of your Baptism, assure your selves, you are hereby as much tied from the least sin in Thought, Word, or Deed, as you can be by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. What will you do then in this case? will you dare to run on in those sins from which your Baptism doth bind you, and so renounce it in your Practice, whilst you own it in profession? Or will you hereafter be so silly as to abstain from the Communion, for fear of engaging your selves in an holy life, to which you stand engag'd already by your own consent? If you continue in this mind, it's too plain a sign that in your  
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Hearts you disown your Baptism it self: And what a case are you in then? For let me ask you, if you had been born of Heathen Parents, and were but just now come to the understanding of the Christian Religion, and were acquainted what kind of Persons they must be that own'd it, would you be Baptiz'd into this Faith, and hereby profess your resolutions to lead such an holy life, as all Christians are commanded? If you say you would not, hence then it follows, that you dislike your Baptism, since if it was to be done again you would none of it. And if indeed you wish your selves, in the case of unbaptized Heathens now, you are really worse than they, and shall be in a worse condition shortly. But if you say, you would readily be baptized if it was yet to do, then saith would I know, why you are so backward to receive the Lord's Supper, wherein you do but renew the Covenant that is made at Baptism, acknowledging your selves to be true Christians. And promising that you will remain so. What possible reason can you devise for this unwillingness?

Withal take notice, all you that are baptized into the Name and Church of Christ, and do stand to your Baptism, you have hereby bound your selves to be his faithful servants, to obey his commands, and to behave your selves in his Church, as he directs you. Now he hath commanded all Christians, that are of capacity, to prepare themselves, and so to receive the Sacrament of his Supper: Do you not clearly perceive then, how your Baptism binds you to this Duty, you being now come to the use of your reason? How is it then that you dare neglect it, whilst you are so faithfully engag'd to it?

And further, beside your own Baptism, every time you bring Children to be Baptized, you profess before God and the Congregation, that you renounce the Devil, the World, and the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, that you believe the Articles of the Christian Faith, and will keep Gods holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of your Life. And are you sincere

in all this? If you are, why should you stay away from the Sacrament, where you are required to profess and promise no more? However, I hope, hence you may be convinc'd, that before you partake of the Lord's Supper, you are so far bound to an holy life, that you have no allowance for the least sin, any more than you have afterward, which is that I am proving.

And this is farther evident by all other Duties of Religion, which you perform to God, every one of which ties you to the most exact Obedience to him. I suppose you are not so Atheistical, but that sometimes you pray to God; and when you pray, do you not beg of him Pardon of Sin, and Grace to do him faithful service? When you say the Lords Prayer, do you not therein beseech God to forgive you your Trespases, and not to lead you into Temptations, but deliver you from Evil? And what, dare you ask of him forgiveness of sin, whilst you are resolv'd to continue in it still? I presume you hope to obtain what you ask, and can you so much as flatter your selves with any hope that God will pardon your sins whilst you will not forsake them? Hath not his word plainly told you the contrary? and when you pray to be kept from sin and the power of Satan, is it not to be suppos'd that you desire these things? and doth the expression of your desires engage you to do what you can to obtain what you pray for? and are you not therefore bound to take heed of sin, to watch against and resist Temptations? Except you take God for an Idol, and make your Prayers in a mockery, as if your Servant should come and intreat you to help him do his work, and then run away, and never set his Hand to't? or as if your Child should pray you to keep him from falling into the Water, and should throw himself into it as soon as he had done. Dare you venture thus to play and dally with the Almighty? And when you desire him to save your Souls, and keep you from Hell, it speaks you resolv'd not willingly to destroy and damn your selves, or else you are horrid mockers of God. Methinks you should never have  
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the impudence to come near to him, or speak a Word to him, whilst you are fully bent to go on in those ways that are so contrary and provoking to him. The like I might say of hearing the Word, you are thereby engaged to give Obedience to it; for you cannot think sure you serve God sufficiently by hearing your Duty, whilst you set not about it. And for you to come to hear what God shall say by his Minister, with a secret purpose to hold on in such and such courses, whatever shall be told you to the contrary, is little less dangerous and damnable, than to come to the Sacrament with such wicked Purposes. Let this then suffice to remove your first Mistake, that you may take liberty in some sinful ways you have a mind to, before you have taken the Sacrament.

The second gross Mistake which I find in your Objection, is, that you think, though at present you have no great mind to be so serious, as to set upon Preparation for the Sacrament, yet that hereafter you shall, when you have had your twinge a while longer, and have taken a little more pleasure, being as yet perhaps but in the time of your Youth, and thereupon you hope that God will bear with you yet a while, since you have such good Purposes to become his Servants for the time to come.

Should I go about fully to shew you the vanity of this Conceit, and your folly in delaying to return to God, I might fill many sheets; wherefore that I may not be tedious, I shall do little more than represent to you the very true language and importance of this pretence of yours, that so you may be ashamed of ever using it more, or harbouring it any longer. When you talk of staying yet a-while, before you cast off your old Companions and Courses, and bind your selves to a Godly Life at the Sacrament, what do you in effect but say, That when you have contemn'd God's Mercy, and griev'd his Spirit a little longer, and done somewhat more to dishonour his Name, then you will betake your selves to him,  
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and become his People; when you have done Satan yet a little more Service, then you'll shake him off, and take Christ for your Master? When you have a while longer trod under foot his precious Blood, then it shall wash you from all your Sins; when you have run deeper on the score, and added something more both to the number and hainousness of your Transgressions, then you'll come for a Pardon; when you have done somewhat more to make God your Enemy, then you'll seek Reconciliation; when you have let your Lusts take deeper rooting, then you'll pluck them up; when you have made them a little stronger, then you'll subdue them; when the Sore is festered, then you'll apply the Plaster; when the Gangreen is almost got to your Vitals, then you'll seek a Remedy? Thus foolishly, thus presumptuously and basely do they argue, who think it too soon yet to come home to God, and be Religious in good earnest. I know you would be ashamed to speak thus, and would scarce be persuaded there lodges so much Wickedness in your Hearts; but for certain there does, whilst you retain secret Purposes to go on in a way of known Sin. Ah poor Sinner! That thou didst but a little know what thou doest, whilst thou standest thus unresolved whether thou shouldest yet bid farewell to thy Lusts, and come over heartily to God by Jesus Christ. Oh disingenuous Creature! dost thou think thou hast not provok'd and dishonour'd thy Maker enough yet? Hast thou not yet sufficiently abused thy Redeemer's Grace and Patience? Hast thou not yet thrown away Time enough? And sinn'd Mercies and Offers enough? Is Sin so sweet and profitable a thing that it should be so hard to determine whether it was best to be forsaken or not? Is God so hard a Master, and his Service such a burdensome thing, that Sinners must be wooed to him with so much Earnestness, and all prove too little with the most? Is it so safe and desirable a State to remain still in the Gall of Bitterness, and under the Wrath of God? Can you keep off this Wrath

which you are plucking upon you? Have you both Repentance and Time at your own beck? And are you sure of Repentance, how long so ever you stay, before you seek it? Will Holiness be good for you hereafter, and is it not now? Or are you afraid of being happy too soon? Wherefore weigh things well, Sirs, and then resolve whether there be any Wisdom in delaying that Work which may be put off too long, but cannot be too quickly done; that Work to which in all Reason and Conscience you stand engaged every hour, even to be divorc'd from Sin and Satan, and firmly betrothed to the Lord Jesus. How long must he seek and sue for thy Consent? Why should he not have thy Youth as well as any other? Doth Satan deserve it better than he? Did not he dye for thee in the prime of his Years, and why shouldst not thou live to him whilst thou art young? When wilt thou have put away that wretched disobedient Answer, that it's yet *too soon* to entertain him? Hath he stood knocking for entrance till his Locks are wet with the Dew of the Night, and is it still *too soon* to open to him, and let him in? Oh beware, lest thy continued Stubbornness should even wear out his Patience; lest thy perverse Carriage should provoke him for ever to leave thee; and lest if still thou think it not *time* yet to break off thy Sins, and set upon a Godly Life, he should think it *time* to cut thee off, and sentence thee to Everlasting Death. In the mean time know, that all thy good Designs, what thou wilt do, and be hereafter, will not be the least Excuse of thy present Wickedness, nor make thy Case any better with God; nay rather, they make it worse; since it appears, thou art convinced in thy Conscience, that thou oughtest to live after another fashion than thou dost, and yet wilfully neglectest thy acknowledged Duty. I hope then I have said enough, to shew that thou hast no Refuge, no Excuse that will hold, whilst thou absentest thy self from the Sacrament, out of a lothness as yet to reform thy Life, and do the Duties to which this would bind thee.

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Wherefore to conclude, If it be thy Purpose to continue in any sinful course, come to the Lord's Table if thou darest : for far be it from me to speak one word to encourage thee to forswear thy self. But yet on the other hand, Go on in thy Sin and stay away, if thou darest : For thou art in danger every moment of dropping into Hell, whilst thou remainest in such a state. Thou seest then to what a strait Sin brings thee, so that turn thee which way thou wilt, whilst thou willingly carriest it about thee, an Angel with a flaming Sword stands full in thy way, threatening Destruction ; whether thou comest or comest not, whilst thou continuest a resolved Sinner, thy Case is sad and deplorable. But yet one way remains, and but one that I know for thy safety, even with all speed to cast away thy Sins, and change thy Heart and Life : And then come as soon as thou wilt to the Lord's Table, there to profess this blessed Change, and to confirm thy self therein. And for thy Encouragement take notice of two things.

1. *It is not an absolute sinless perfection that here thou bindest thy self to ;* even this thou should'st thirst and aspire after, but yet thou art not to be discouraged, if thou never attain it, till thou art taken into the number of *the Spirits of just Men made perfect*. Mistake me not, as if I was indulging thee an allowance in any the least Sin ; no, this is it I warn thee of, and against this thou must Covenant in the Sacrament, to wit, against a willing, loving Entertainment of any Sin whatever. And thou shalt be accounted true to this Covenant, if thou hate and strive against all, and art humble under the sense of thy remaining imperfections, being far more desirous to be rid of them, than to retain them ; And if upon knowledge of any slip or stumble thou risest again by true Repentance, and recourse to the Blood of Christ for Mercy, and to his Spirit for fresh Strength, being resolved to take more heed to thy ways for the time to come. It is here as if thou should'st promise thy Physician, thou would'st be careful of thy Health ;

this doth not imply, that thou wilt never be sick more, but yet it implies thus much, that thou wilt not wilfully bring Diseases upon thy self, but wilt use the Means that are appointed to preserve thy Health; and whatever Sickneſs cleaves to thee will be thy Trouble, and thou wilt deſire and endeavour to be freed from it. Even thus art thou bound to regard the Health of thy Soul, and to look upon ſin as a ſpiritual ſickneſs, and therefore never to fall in love with it, but do thy beſt toward it's utter removal: Even thoſe infirmities, to which the beſt are liable, are not to be cheriſht and pleaded for, no more then thou wouldſt plead for the keeping of a little Head-ach, or any Bodily pain. Thou ſhould'ſt not by thy good will be guilty ſo much as of a vain Thought, an idle Word, or the leaſt motion to any Sin; but yet it is not required of thee, to promiſe abſolutely never more to be guilty of any of theſe; nor art thou to judge thy ſelf unfit for the Sacrament, becauſe thou find'ſt ſuch imperfections cleave to thee, ſo long as from thy Heart thou abhorreſt them, and do'ſt ordinarily overcome all Temptations to more groſs and wilful Sins. Whiſt thou art in the Fleſh, thy ſtate is like to be ſo far imperfect, that it will be thy daily Duty to grow in Grace, and to pray for the *forgiveneſs of thy Treaſures*; to improve Chriſt, both as a treaſury of Grace whence thou art to be ſupplied, and as an advocate with the Father, through whom thou may'ſt be pardoned. This I mention, that thou may'ſt not ſay, I diſcourage thee from the Sacrament, by making it an engagement to greater ſtrictneſs, than it's poſſible for Man in this Life to come up to, ſince I do aſſure thee thou may'ſt ſafely come hither, if thou art but ſincerely reſolved to do what in thee lies to pleaſe God, and not to run wilfully into thoſe actions, which thou know'ſt are contrary to his will. And this alſo may take away that ſond opinion of ſome ignorant People, that it's beſt never to receive the Sacrament, till they come to their Death-bed, as thinking that every Sin afterward will damn them;

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but remember what I have told you, that we do not promise never to sin more, but not to allow our selves in sin; and to this sincere endeavour to keep all God's Commands, we are before as strictly tied by our Baptism, and therefore by your reason this should be deferred till we come to die, as some of the Ancients did, partly through this mistake, and thinking this wash away all the Sins before committed. And if you should be of this opinion also, that the Sacrament gives you a Pardon of all your former Sins, and therefore it's good to put it off to your Death-bed, consider well, that it's by vertue of God's Promises that you have any ground to expect Pardon of Sin; and by those Promises, to which the Sacraments are seals, this Pardon is assured to all penitent believing ones; so that Baptism and the Lord's Supper do seal your pardon, even of Sins that may hereafter be committed; if you truly repent of them, and betake your selves to God's Mercy in Christ for forgiveness: But if you think, when you have liv'd an ungodly Life, to make up all by taking the Sacrament when you are sick, know, to your timely conviction, this will not do the Work, as you shall know to your terrour, if you depend upon't; for remember what I told you, that if you do not truly repent of Sin, it is not the Sacrament that will give you a Pardon, and this true Repentance few upon a Death-bed have, that put it off till then. Moreover, you that are for deferring this Duty till you come to die, I might ask you how you know whether you shall not die suddenly, or have the use of your reason taken away by your distemper, or be visited with the Plague, that no Minister dare come near you? And farther, you seem not to consider, that this Ordinance is exceeding helpful to us, for the overcoming of Lusts, and leading our Lives as we ought, and this brings me to the second thing which I would have you take notice of.

2. Namely, That if thou art but once come up to a resolution, to do thy best against Sin, and to please God, and addressell thy self to the Lord's Supper, with an earnest



earnest desire of Grace to be here given thee from Christ, to enable thee to perform thy Promises, thou may'st very confidently expect Strength and Assistance from him, and even now to partake thereof. Little dost thou think what a mighty blow thou mightest give to thy strong Lusts, and to the Kingdom of Satan within thee, by such a firm Resolution as this, made with an humble dependance upon God's Grace, bound upon, and confirmed by taking the Sacrament. Oh ! If thou wast but brought into so ingenuous and good a frame, as to be truly grieved, that Sin and Satan should have so much Interest in thee, and didst heartily desire, that God would cast them forth, and take possession of thee for himself, in how good a way wast thou then to a deliverance ? If God saw thee labouring under the burden of thy Lusts, tugging with thy backward Heart, to bring it to him, thou canst not imagine what Help he would soon afford thee. Wherefore sit not down in a faint dejection ; say not, *there is no hope of ever getting up such strong Lusts, which are so deep rooted in my Nature, and so confirmed by long Custom, it's to no purpose to attempt it.* Why Man, must not this Work be done, or thou perish for ever ? And the longer it's delayed, the harder it's like to be. Thy Case is sad indeed, but not desperate yet : Let neither thy Presumption, nor Despondency, make it desperate. *The things that are impossible with Men, are possible with God.* Wherefore rouse thy self, and gather up all thy Strength ; for be sure, sitting still will bring thy Death. Limit not God's Power, but ask thy own Heart, whether thou art willing to be cured : For no Diseases are too hard for the Physician that will take thee in hand. If thou wilt but attend upon him, and humbly beg, and accept his Help, oh how soon can he bring down all high imaginations, and every thought that rebels against him, and subdue all things to himself ! He hath healed and cleansed as vile Sinners as thou, and conquered as stubborn Hearts as thine. He can so change thy Nature, and the very temper and bent of thy Soul,

that

that thou shalt abhor those Sins which thou now thinkest thou canst not live without, so that thou wilt chuse rather to be torn Limb from Limb, or to take Toads and Serpents into thy Bosom, than to meddle with what was once so pleasant ; and wilt wonder that ever thou should'st be such a Beast, such a Devil, as to take delight in that which was so hurtful to thy self, and so displeasing to God. Oh let not then the seeming sweetness of any Lust bewitch thee any longer, or betray thee into a slothful neglect of thy Duty : If Sin would have made thee happy, thou hadst found it long since, and yet what hast thou ever got from it, that comforts thee to look back upon it ? Or that would do thee any good, if thou wast to dye at this hour ? And put it on thy account, nothing better wilt thou get at last. But little do'st thou think what thou losest one Year after another whilst thou remainest estranged from God, and think'st an Holy Life such a tedious difficult thing. Be perswaded then at length to make tryal, and see what can be done in the case. Bind thy self by the most solemn Vow to forsake thy wicked ways, and to become God's faithful Servant, and come to the Sacrament with this design ; and if thou be sincere, thou may'st be confident of receiving help from God, to keep his Covenant, which, by his Word and Spirit, thou art drawn to make with him. So much for the third Objection.

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## C H A P. XV.

*Obj. We are not in perfect Charity, but at Variance with our Neighbours, Answered.*

4. *Obj.* **T**HE fourth and last that I shall take notice of, is very common in the Mouths of many, to wit, *That they are at Variance with their Neighbours, and therefore cannot with good Conscience come to the Communion, whither none are to come, but they that are in perfect Charity with all Men;* and commonly they alledge, that they have Law-suits, or some kind of Quarrellings one with another.

*Ans.* In answer hereto, let me ask you, who put this Objection, whose Fault is it that you are not at Peace with your Neighbours? I question not but you'll presently tell me, that the Fault is theirs. But then farther, have you no Enmity in your Minds against them? But are you willing to be reconciled to them, and to do what on your part may conduce thereto? And though they be cross and perverse, yet do you from your Heart forgive them, so that you would not take Revenge on them, if it were in your power, but would do them good if they should need your help? It's very like you will be ready to reply, that you are thus well-affected toward them, and that the Malice is only on their part: And for the present I shall suppose you speak true; whereupon I demand, whether you can be so weak, as to think that another Man's Sin shall be lay'd to your charge? If your Neighbour be malicious, is that any Fault of yours? Or doth his Malice make you any more unfit for the Sacrament, than his Drunkenness or Coverousness? What a sad Case might the best Christian be in, if it was in the power of every wicked Man, that owes him a spight, to make it unlawful for him to go to the Sacrament? as by your arguing it would be.

Suppose



Suppose any malicious Man should without reason pick a quarrel with me, and after I have used all means to pacifie him, he should utterly refuse to be at Peace; what's to be done in this case? Must I stay away from the Sacrament till I can perswade him to be friends with me? Perhaps that may never be, and must I be bound to a thing impossible? or be so great a loser through another Man's Wickedness, which I cannot help? Is it not enough for me to be reconcil'd to him in my own mind, and freely to forgive him what Injuries he hath done me? How else would those blessed Saints in the Primitive Times have done, whilst they were maligned and persecuted by almost all Men? We never find that they made this any pretence to keep away from the Lord's Table, at which they did so frequently attend. They thought themselves guiltless (as well they might) whilst they prayed for their Persecutors, blest them that curst them, not avenging themselves, but giving place unto Wrath, and not giving to any Man just cause of Offence. And do you but labour thus to behave yourselves, and then never trouble your minds with other Mens Enmity against you. Yea, do but thus, and you will fully answer the Command God hath given us, to live in Peace and Quietness, *Rom. 12. 18. If it be possible, as much as in you lies, live peaceably with all Men.* Which words plainly insinuate, that it is not always possible to have the good Will of all Men, but yet we must labour for this, and do nothing that may hinder it, and therefore above all must not bear or discover ill Will to them.

But here perhaps some will reply, that they are forc'd to vindicate their Wrongs, and go to Law with those that would abuse them, or that sue them without cause, and therefore can they with a safe Conscience receive the Sacrament before the Contention is ended? Why, to this you must even ask your own Hearts for an answer. For (as I said before) if you all this while have no malicious Design against them, but seek only to defend

send or right your selves in a just and lawful manner, there's nothing that need trouble you in this case. For in the thing it self, it's not a Sin to go to Law, if the Cause and Design be good, no more than it was for the *Jews* to appeal to their Judges, to determine Matters betwixt Man and Man. And therefore when the Apostle condemns the Christians, for going to Law one with another, before the Heathen Judges, which made it *utterly a Fault*, he yet adviseth them to set some in the Church to judge betwixt the Brethren, in Controversies that might happen touching their Worldly Concernments, *1 Cor. 6. 4, 5.* And these Suits may possibly be lawful on both sides, as when such a difficult Case shall happen that cannot otherwise be decided, and then both Parties might maintain Charity to each other, if they were but such as they ought. But if without cause you are vext by Men of Contention, beware of acting out of Wrath, Spleen or Revenge; yea, or of doing any thing out of meer selfishness: For even in your Temporal Concerns, about your Estate, Credit, &c. God's Interest should be more aimed at than your own; and you should not so much endeavour to secure or recover these for your own sake as that you may hereby be more capable of honouring God: And if you saw, that through some Circumstances, it might tend more to God's Honour, to neglect a Vindication of your Right than to prosecute it, in such a Case it would be your Duty to sit still. (They that have devoted themselves, and all they have to God, will understand this and none else.) Hence you find the Apostle expostulating with the Christians, why they would not take Wrong, and even suffer themselves to be defrauded rather than contend, whereby they did then so much disgrace Religion, Verse 7. of that fore-quoted Chapter. But yet I say, when it is your Duty to maintain your Right, against those that would abuse you, you may do this, and yet have no Spight against their Persons, nor any desire of their Hurt, if your own Hearts be right; and

and may really forgive them, whilst you endeavour to avoid the Injury which they would offer you. And let this suffice on supposition that you are thus well-affected towards those that make themselves your Adversaries; which if you indeed be, I hope I need use no more words to perswade you, that other Mens malicious Behaviour towards you, need be no hindrance to your coming to the Sacrament.

But on the other side, give me leave to deal plainly with you, all you that insist upon this reason for neglecting your Duty, *because there's difference betwixt you and your Neighbours*, I strongly suspect that you your selves are very much in fault; and indeed you confess as much by your Practice, whilst in your Words you disown it; for why is it you make this a ground of abstaining from the Sacrament, but that your Consciences tell you, you bare so much ill-will to your Neighbours, that its a dangerous thing for you to receive it? Oh look back upon your ways, and see whether instead of bearing Wrongs, you have not wrong'd and defrauded others. Have you not oppress'd, or needlessly vext them, through eager designs of raising your selves by their Ruins, not caring whom you have injured and trampled upon, so you might but get your own ends? Or if you will not own this, yet look faithfully into the Temper of your Souls. Do you not stand vilely affected towards some that have done you Injuries, and whom you take for your Enemies? Are you not backward to any thorough Reconciliation with them? Do you not stand upon your Terms; and expect that they should come first and humble themselves, and stoop to you, before you'll seek after any Peace with them? Your great Spirits scorn to be first in this Work; nay, its well if you are not resolv'd against it, let them do what they will. Oh proud wretches! Is this like God's dealing with the World? When we had given him the Offence, yet who was it began first to treat of a Peace? Hath the great God given you this Example, and yet are you *too good*, for-  
sooth,



sooth, to seek to your Fellow-creatures to be at Peace with you? If this be your *Goodness*, may not the Devil himself pass for *good*? For he hath Pride enough, and what's yours better? But farther, do you not cherish a sacred spleen against them, which fills you with implacable desires of being reveng'd on them, and makes you griev'd to see them do well in the World? whereas you could heartily wish their Ruin, and would delight to be in a capacity of doing them a Mischief; and long to bring them under you, that you might insult over them, and make them repent that ever they displeased such as you. Oh devilish and monstrous spirit! That ever it should dwell in the breasts of any that call themselves Christians! *Christians* are they call'd? They deserve not the name of *Men*. Certainly there are many as good Christians as these hang'd at *Tyburn*, for cutting Mens Throats. For did not the Fear of Man restrain them, you should quickly see their envenom'd Rancour break out into as bad effects. But suppose your Malice be not boil'd up to such an height, yet if you harbour so much as makes you unfit for the Sacrament (as according to your own acknowledgment you do, whilst it keeps you from it) it's a plain sign your Souls are yet under miserable Distempers, far from being truly sanctified; you live still under the power of Self-love, unmortified Pride or Covetousness which are the secret cause of this your Discord with others. And alas! though these present differences were ended, you would be far from a fitness for the Sacrament, whilst you abide in the Condition you are in, not having your Peace made with God, but being in Enmity against him, through a subjection to your reigning Lulls. And therefore you might more truly say you are not fit for this Duty, because you are proud, and coverous, and envious, than because you are at variance with any one; only you hope for some kind of Excuse, by laying the Fault on others, but that I have taken off before. And furthermore, is it not a plain discovery, how little Love you have

have to Christ and your own Souls; that you can willingly be so long absent from this Ordinance, upon such a silly pretence as this, that your Neighbours and you are not agreed? It's a sign of an ill Stomach, when People are glad of an Excuse to save them from eating. What, could not you, if you had been so minded, have got an Agreement before now? Or at least, could not you have done so much towards it, as might have satisfied your Consciences, that you were not in fault? Was there but any Worldly Advantage to be got by doing thus much, you would sooner set about it, I'll warrant you. But being, I doubt, very indifferent to Sacraments, or to any thing that concerns your Souls, a very little reason serves to keep you from them, since you find no want of them, nor can imagine how you should be much bettered by them. And whilst you are in this wretched frame, be sure you shall never want one thing or other to hinder you. To bring you to better apprehensions of things, let what I have said before suffice: For I now hasten to a conclusion; only let me wish you to beware of cheating your selves with that Mistake, which I endeavoured to remove under the last Objection, to wit, That whilst you come not to the Sacrament, you may safely persist in such and such Actions, or in such a Temper of Mind, which ought to be changed before you go thither: For thus you seem to think, whilst you stay away, because there are fallings out betwixt you and others; being it seems resolved to continue in your Enmity, and think your selves secure enough, if you come not hither in this evil Mind. If these be your Thoughts, pray answer me these two things.

1. *How can you desire of God the forgiveness of your Sins, whilst you refuse to forgive others?* Have you the Impudence to do it? Or the Ignorance and Presumption, to think such Desires would be granted? See where the contrary is expressly told you, in that fore-mentioned place, *Matth. 6. 15.* Nay, tell me plainly, How dare you so much as say the Lord's Prayer, wherein  
you

you beg of God to *forgive your Trespases, as you forgive those that trespass against you*? What, do you pray that he would remember your Iniquities, and charge them upon you, and take Vengeance of you? For thus it seems you deal with those that offend you: Or do you think to make your Case somewhat the better, by never saying this Prayer, or by leaving out this Petition? Can you imagine this will hinder God from dealing with you according to the Tenour thereof? Methinks you should not be so weak: No, be you sure, God will make good his Word, that if you forgive not, you shall not be forgiven, whether you give your Consent or not. If you say you do forgive your Enemies, then I ask you again, why upon account of any Differences you should neglect the Sacrament? But if you do not forgive them, you see it's as dangerous to say your Prayers, whilst you are in this mind, as to come to the Communion.

2. But again, If through these Differences with your Neighbours you are unfit for the Sacrament, pray be-think you well, *whether upon the same account you are not as unfit for Death*? And dare you continue in such a desperate Condition as this? Do you not believe, that the Charity which is required to make you fit for the Communion of imperfect Saints here on Earth, is as necessary for your admission into the Communion of Saints in Glory? Are you not fit to go to the Lord's Table? And are you then fit to appear before his Tribunal? Take this for an undoubted Truth, that if you so far allow your self in Malice, or any other Sin, that you are (according to the Gospel Rule) unworthy of the Sacrament, if you dye in this Condition, you will be thought unworthy of Everlasting Life. Methinks then you should never dare to live in such an Estate, wherein you dare not dye. You take it to be a dangerous thing to dye out of Charity with any, and is it safe think you to live out of Charity, or in any other Sin, for those that are liable to Death every Moment?

Where-



Wherefore, to conclude, my Advice to you is, that you would without any longer delay go to your Brother, and if you have wrong'd him, acknowledge it, and make all due Preparation, and do what in you lies to be reconciled to him: But if he prove obstinate, or have wrong'd you, see that you heartily forgive him, and clear your breast of all Spight, or desire of Revenge; so being careful in all other respects duly to prepare your selves to come to the Lord's Table, there to receive a Confirmation of Peace betwixt God and your own Spul. And thus I have done with the several Objections that are made against this Duty.

## CHAPTER

## C H A P. XVI.

*Directions for a due Preparation, and right Receiving.*

**I**N the last place, according to my Promise, I come to give some Directions to those who are willing to address themselves to this Work; to instruct them for their immediate Preparation to their Behaviour in and after the same. And though I have already at large shewn what the design of this Ordinance is, that so we might the better know how to behave our selves thereat, and have thence discovered what kind of Persons Communicants ought to be, yet I shall in a few words premise a repetition of the same, that you may the better apprehend and remember it.

Know then, that it pleased our Blessed Lord Jesus, in the Evening of that Night wherein he was betrayed, to appoint this Sacrament of his Supper, partly for the present Comfort of his Apostles (who began to be cast down upon the knowledge of his Sufferings, and removal from amongst them) but principally for the Benefit of them, and all other Christians, in the times that were to follow, even till he should come to Judgment, till which time it never ought to be laid down in the Church. The great end of it was (as I have said) to preserve fresh in the Minds of all Christians, the Memory of their Lord and Master, and especially of that unvaluable Mercy shewn in his dying for them, his Death being very clearly held forth by the breaking of the Bread, and pouring out of the Wine. But we must not think, that it was for an idle uneffectual Remembrance of him, that he commanded this Duty, but for such a Remembrance, as might tend to the great Advantage of our Souls; even that by remembering our Redemption, we might be brought to have low mean Thoughts

Thoughts of our selves, who were lost and undone, but recovered by Free Grace ; that we might keep up a sense of the exceeding great Evil of Sin, which made us liable to those Miseries, whence only his Death can deliver us, and so might be stirred up to a greater sorrow for hatred of, and resolutions against Sin, the occasion of his Death ; and that by the Remembrance of his Love, we might be the stronglier engaged to him, and here in a visible and expresse manner, might solemnize our Covenant with him, and frequently renew our Promises of Faithfulness. Moreover, here Christ hath made a familiar representation of the Blessings he hath obtained for Believers, that hereby we might be quickened to earnest desires after them, and so being at present fitted, for the Communications of Grace to our Souls, might receive the same ; and might here also receive a confirmation of our Faith, that we shall in due time enjoy those Priviledges that are invisible, and yet to come. And farther, he hath ordained, that his Death should in this lively manner, at set times be represented to us, that having it fresh in our Thoughts, we may be the more powerfully moved at such seasons as these, to celebrate and adore that Wisdom and Goodness, which hath so wonderfully appeared in the contrivance and accomplishment of our Redemption ; and that Fellow-Christians meeting together for this work, may be the more endeared to one another, and quickened to long after a perfect Communion in the Praises and Love of God and their Redeemer, in that future Glory whereof they have here a shadow and foretast.

Now as the ends for which this Ordinance was appointed inform us, what kind of Persons they that frequent it ought to be, as to their habitual qualifications, so do they also teach us, what ought to be the workings of our Soul in our approaches to it ; since here we are to exercise and put forth those Graces, which are before required to be wrought in us : But yet for your plainer Direction, I shall tell you more particularly how

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you



you ought then to behave your selves ; and lastly shall shew, how you may improve it afterwards to your greatest Advantage.

But by the way take notice, that I suppose you, to whom I now speak, to be such as are heartily willing to come to the Sacrament in that manner, and to those ends, which Christ hath commanded ; and therefore I suppose you to be already so far convinc'd of the Evil of Sin, that you are resolved to forsake it ; and so far convinc'd of the greatness of those Benefits that come by a Saviour, and of your need of him, that you are firmly purpos'd to accept of him, as he offers himself to you, that you may be his, and he may be yours for ever. And upon this account, I shall say little to put you upon, or help you in that Self-examination, whereby you may come to the knowledge of your own Estates, whether you have a true work of Grace wrought in your Hearts or not, since I have before said so much to this purpose ; but shall now rather direct you, how to exercise and express your Repentance, Faith, and other Graces. Only as you go along, if you find your selves willing to perform the Duties I shall mention, you have reason to believe that your Condition is good ; but if you refuse these, you have too much ground to suspect, that all is not well with you. And though it be usual to distinguish betwixt Directions for an immediate Preparation to the Sacrament, and those that are for a right demeanour in the act of Receiving, yet I shall chuse rather to speak of both under the same Head, since it hath been my Business all along, to bring Souls to a fitness for this Work, and since in our Performance of the Duty, our Hearts ought to be kept in the same disposition and frame that they were brought into, by our Preparations for it.

1. First then, I would advise you who intend to come to the Lord's Table, to set apart some convenient time for the preparing of your Souls for this weighty Work. It is a most serious Business, and ought to be seriously

taken

taken in hand : Let nothing here be done cursorily or rashly. Not that I would have you daunted, as if it was a work of that nature, that you must either come trembling, or else stay away for fear : No, but only see you be very serious ; for so you ought to be whenever you have any thing to do with God, even when you so much as mention his Name, or open a Bible, or come to hear his Word ; and therefore being now in a more especial manner to draw near to him, in a Duty wherein a Miscarriage is more dangerous, it's very requisite that you make more solemn Preparation for it, since upon this, the right Performance of it doth very much depend. And therefore it is, that I would have you set some time apart for that purpose, which will be most convenient in the Week, or on the Day before you Receive : though I would have you be employed in this Work more than once or twice. But if you are Servants, and so are straightned of Time, or through Poverty are constrained to daily Labour, you must watch for the fittest Opportunities you can get. And it is no doubt, but you will find Time enough, if you will but be watchful to redeem Time from Idleness, and vain ways of spending it. However it's better to spare some Time from your Working, or Sleeping, yea, or Eating, than to neglect those Works, for which you had your Life it self : For it's of far more consequence, I hope, to save your Souls for ever, than to keep your Bodies alive a little while, though you may very well do both, if you be willing.

2. Having set apart some Time, see that you be not only got alone, and your Hands taken off your Business, but let your Hearts be withdrawn from off all worldly things, and set, as in the presence of God, upon an employment of no small consequence ; and humbly beg of God that he would vouchsafe you his Presence and Assistance in these your Preparations, and in the Work you are preparing for ; that he would set and keep your Minds in a frame suitable thereto ; and graciously own,

accept and bless you, who in Obedience to him have set upon this Duty. And beg of him, that he would help you in the searching of your Heart, and reviewing of your Life, that you may not only have a sight of Sin, but a right sense of its Vileness, that you may not only think of it, but grieve for it; and that all your Meditations may be attended with suitable Affections, and that in all, you may be sincere and upright, that so upon good grounds, you may take Comfort in the review of what you shall have done, and by this present Opportunity may be advanc'd one step forward toward your Eternal Rest.

3. And when you have done thus, Let your first Work be, *to enter into such a serious Consideration of your own Estate, both by Nature and Practice, as may be most effectual to bring you to a sound Repentance.* The reason why I advise you to this first, is, because you being now about to celebrate the Remembrance of the greatest Mercy that ever was manifested to Mankind, wherein especially Love and Thankfulness are to be exercised, it is not possible you should feelingly acknowledge it as so great a Mercy, if you be not very sensible of your own Misery, and of that absolute need you stand in of it. Should you offer Money to one, who thinks he has no great want of it, he might take it perhaps, but not with that Thankfulness that another would, who is ready to starve for lack of relief. A Man that perceives him self sinking and drowning, with what readiness will he lay hold on an Hand that's held out to save him? Thus, the deeper sense you have of your own vileness, the more will you admire God's Goodness, in having any regard to such a worthless wretch as you. The greater you perceive your Sins to be, the more need you will see of pardoning Mercy, the more you will prize, and the closer will you cleave to Christ, and the more readily will you come hither to receive the Seal of your Pardon. The lower your Humiliations are, the higher ordinarily will you rise in Praise and Joy.



Joy. Wherefore it will be very needful, especially if this be the first time of thy Receiving, or though it should not, yet I say, it will be needful and profitable for thee to take an impartial view of thy self, what a vile and unworthy Sinner thou art, that so thou may'st think meanly of thy self as thou oughtest to think, and may'st be sincerely humbled in the remembrance of all thy Miscarriages. And for thy Help herein I shall run over a few Particulars.

Consider what a sinful Nature thou brought'st into the World with thee, being *conceived in Sin, and shapen in Iniquity*, and being hereby a *Child of Wrath*. Think how ignorant thou art of God, how much at Enmity with him naturally; how exceeding prone to all Sin, and how averse from Goodness, as by Experience thou hast lately found, and didst soon begin to find, so that thou may'st well acknowledge, *that in thy Flesh dwells no good thing*. And then remember with brokenness of Heart, how early thou didst set upon a trade of actual sinning, wherein thou hast been so constant all thy days. And call to mind the several Ages of thy Life which thou hast past through, and the particular Sins of those Times: The Sensuality and Pride, and all the Follies of thy Youth; thy mispence of precious Time in idleness and foolish Sports and Pastimes. Reflect also upon the Sins of thy riper Years, if thou art yet come to them, such commonly as Company-keeping, Drunkenness and Wantonness; or on the other hand, Coverousness, over-eager following of the World, to the neglect of God's Service, injuring and over-reaching your Neighbours, uncharitableness to the Poor. Call to mind also the Places and Relations you have lived in, and the Sins you were therein guilty of, as whilst you were at home with your Parents, at School, or in Service, or any other way dispos'd of: Think whether you were not guilty of telling Lies, of Disobedience, Slothfulness, and Unfaithfulness, which are the usual Sins of those Times. You will find it very profitable and affecting, to be as particular and

punctual as you can in this Review, as to think at such a Place, in such Company, I was guilty of such and such Sins. And then fetch in matter for your Humiliation, by considering the several Aggravations of your Sins, as your being devoted to God by Baptism, and yet revolting from him, when you came to the use of your Reason; receiving all you had from him, and yet rebelling against him, abusing your Mercies to the Dishonour of the giver. Moreover *your* Sins are much the more heinous, who have had good Education, and been brought up to hear and read the Word of God, and have been plainly told what is your Duty, and yet have neglected it; who have had many a time convictions of the sinfulness and danger of your courses, and yet have gone on in them, and have had some purposes of a Reformation, and yet have soon lost them; or it may be under some Pangs of Conscience, or in a Fit of Sickness, you have made Promises of Amendment, and yet all came to nothing, but after that you went on in a careless course of Life. You whom I now suppose to be thoroughly converted to God, let it grieve your Hearts thus to remember the Sins of your unregenerate State, that you should live so long estrang'd from God, and entertain such unworthy Thoughts of him, and do so much to provoke him, whom you have since found so good and gracious. How can you with dry Eyes think of that time, when you were like others, *foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers Lusts and Pleasures?* Methinks you should be fill'd with a kind of horror when you do but reflect upon that dismal State: When you think how near you were to the burning Lake, and yet how secure; and when you consider what a meer sink of loathsome Sins your Hearts once were. Oh Sirs! Was not that a sad time, when you could take delight in nothing but in doing your selves Mischief? When nothing tasted sweet but draughts of Poyson? When the very bent of your Souls was contrary to God and Godliness? So that whatever had a tendency hereto was nauseated

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by you? Prayer was a burden, Hearing a burden, Holy Conference strange and troublesome, and a Godly Life was accounted the greatest Toil and Slavery in the World; so that you could go whole Days and Weeks without any Thought of God, and never feel any hurt in it. Oh can you without shame remember, how you have many a time hearkened to Satan's Temptations, whilst the good Spirit of God hath been resisted and grieved? How did your loving Saviour follow you from time to time, and by his Spirit and Ministers beseech you that you would be reconciled to God? And yet you did stubbornly and unkindly put him off; when he had laid open to you what he had done for you, and what Advantages he came to bring you, yet you slighted his Offers, as if they were inconsiderable Things. Are you not amazed at your own daring Impudence and Presumption, to make the great God wait on you so long in vain? He who in a Moment could have flap'd that Breath which he gave you, and thrown you into the Hell you deserved, that yet you durst disobey his Commands, yea, even reject the Suit he made to you, to save your own Souls. But to proceed, you are also to call to mind your Miscarriages, since God by the Power of his Grace brought you home to himself, and shew'd you so much of the Evil of Sin, that you acknowledged your former Behaviour to be full as vile as I have been representing it, and did engage your selves to him, to become his obedient People. Now consider how you have answered this Engagement. And though since that time, your Sins may not have been so gross, nor so frequent as before they were, yet they are now of another nature, and capable of greater Aggravations, as being committed against greater Light and experienced Love, even against that God who hath freely pardoned you, and received you into his Favour. Think then how unsuitably you have walk'd to the Profession you have made, and the Means you have enjoy'd, how unthankful you have been for Mercies, how unfruitful



and unserviceable since you became the Servants of God, though heretofore you had done so much against him; think how little you have done as Parents, Masters and Neighbours, to advance his Glory, and consider and bewail all other failings, in the Duties of your Relations. Oh think what folly it was in you so much as to venture upon the least Sin, who have been convinced that it's your own greatest hurt; or to start aside from the holy Path, to walk in which you have found to be infinitely most for your own Ease and Advantage. Let it grieve you to find such remnants of Sin yet in your selves, any inclination to Evil and backwardness to Good. With sorrow look back upon all your slips and haltings, and partial backslidings, that you have made no more progress in Holiness, nor got more Good by the Privileges vouchsaf'd you. Be humbled in the remembrance of your Dulness, Hypocrisie, Formality in Religious Duties, being either prone to neglect them, or flubber them over in a cold and drowsie manner, or else to rest in them. Call to mind also your unfaithfulness to the many Promises, you have made of better Obedience, in your Prayers, or at the Lord's Table; and especially review your Carriage since the last Sacrament, you who have formerly received it. And having by such like Considerations as these affected your Hearts with a sense of your Iniquities, humbly betake your selves to God, and lay open all before him by a free and full Confession: acknowledge what wretched hainous Sinners you are, and how unworthy of the least Favour, and beg of him to work and increase in you that true and kindly Sorrow for Sin, which may fit you for Mercy. And cease not by your good Will from this Confession, till you find your Souls even melted within you, in the apprehension of your own Vileness; but however, cease not till you find in your Hearts a loathing of every Sin, and of your selves by reason of it. And if you have but an inward sense of your Sores and Pollutions, you will not want such words to express it, as will be acceptable

ceptable to God : Only see that you be sincere, and let your Heart make your Confessions rather than your Tongue. Labour to be as sensible of your Case, as you would be if now you stood before a King whom you had offended, from whom except you could beg a Pardon, you must presently be put to Death, of which Pardon there was good hope, if he did but perceive you to be really sorry for your Fault. Oh how affectionate and earnest would you be in this Case ! and would have words at will to express your self. How passionately would you acknowledge and bewail the Offence you had committed ? And with what vehemence profess against ever being guilty of the like ? And how importunately would you beg for Mercy, when you saw no other way but present Death, if your Importunity did not prevail ? Thus behave your selves towards God, and believe that he stands over you now in your Cloister, and hearkens to your Prayers, and observes whether you be hearty in them or not. But remember all this while, it is an inward dislike and abhorrence of Sin, wherein the truth of your Repentance consists, more than in bare confessing it, and speaking against it with the greatest fervour : These are required too, but beware of taking up with these ; Beware, I say, as ever you hope for Mercy, of retaining any secret liking to Sin, or the least thoughts of continuing in it till, whilst with a great deal of stir you revile it as such an abominable thing. But rather, if you find in your Souls a kind of handkering after some old Lust, not yet thoroughly mortified, betake your selves to those Considerations which may bring you out of love with it, as how little it's like to do for you, what an Happiness it doth now and will hereafter deprive you of, what a Misery it leads to, with other the like formerly laid down ; and quit not these Thoughts, till you find your selves turned against it. For once again let me assure you, then, and never till then, is your Repentance right, when you are not only brought to grieve for Sin, but to hate it ;

it; when your Hearts are not only broken in the remembrance of it, but are broken off from, and thoroughly bent against it.

Though this exercise of Repentance seems most properly preparative to the Work you are going about, yet in such a penitent humble Frame would I have you be, even when you are at the Lord's Table. If you eat this Bread, and mingle the Wine with Tears, it will be never the worse for your Souls. And must it not needs affect thee to behold Christ's Body broken, and his Blood poured out here in a Figure, and then to think with thy self, This was Sin, *my Sin*: even *my Pride* and *Earthliness*, and all the Wickedness of *my Heart* and *Life*, was part of that Load which he bare on his own Body on the Cross, when he cryed out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Might not the Lord call to me, and even shew me the Print of my many grievous Sins, in his Hands and Feet, and the deep Stabs they gavel him? And yet ungrateful Wretch that I am, how little have I valued this his Love? How little hath my Heart been affected herewith? Where had I been, and what had become of me, if he had not thus undertaken for me? Oh what had my Sins brought upon me, if he had not interpos'd and kept it off? How mad and senseless have I been, in venturing upon Sin, harbouring and delighting in Sin? Sin, which is so hainous a thing, that without shedding of Blood it must not be remitted; and for which no Blood, but that of Christ's, could obtain a Remission. How more especially hainous then is my Guilt, in undervaluing this Blood so much and so long as I have done? How base was my Heart to give entertainment to Sin, after I had heard what it had done against Christ? And to deny Entertainment to him, after I had heard how much he had done for me? Was his Kindness such as to bleed for my Sins, and shall not I weep for them, especially for the Unkindness I have shewn to him? As God never shew'd greater Love to Man, than in delivering up his Son for our Offences, so

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he never shew'd greater hatred of Sin than by this action; and therefore conformably, as we ought hereby to be brought to the greatest Love of God, so to the deepest Hatred of Sin, and Humiliation for it. But I have formerly more fully shewn how the Consideration of Christ's Death may bring us to true Repentance, and what I there spoke chiefly of a change of State, may be applied to the particular exercise of Repentance, wherefore I shall insist no more on this. Only let me meet with an Objection, that may perhaps be in the minds of some, namely, *That Sorrow for Sin at this time, scarce seems consistent with that hope of Mercy, that Joy and Thankfulness, which are chiefly required in the Communicant.* Know therefore, that I press no Sorrow, but what is a preparation to Joy, and doth even animate and exalt it, whilst the humble Christian reflects upon his own nothingness and unworthiness, and thence is carried forth to the greater admiration of that Mercy that hath so favourably regarded him. And take notice farther, that I would have the sense of Divine Bounty, chiefly to raise and keep up this Humiliation; whilst we think with our selves, *Oh what wretched Creatures are we, thus to offend so loving a Father, who notwithstanding all our Provocations, is yet compassionate towards us, and upon our return to him is so readily reconciled!* To retain this apprehension of Love in the midst of our Mourning, will make them most ingenuous, and even pleasant to our Souls; and though it will make us sincere and deep in our Repentance, yet it will so moderate our Spirits, that we shall not sorrow as those without hope; and I could wish, that Christians in all their Sorrows would observe this Rule. But then that such an ingenuous Shame and Sorrow as this is consistent with the greatest confidence of Mercy, there is not the least doubt, for which (to omit all farther Proof of a Matter so plain) see that very fit Text, *Ezek. 16. 62, 63. And I will establish my Covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: That thou may'st remember and be*

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confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God. It is to be considered moreover, that the Promises of Joy are principally made to this frame. The Spirit of the humble and contrite, God hath promised to revive; They that mourn shall be comforted. And they who come to the Table of the Lord weeping, are most likely to return from thence rejoicing.

4. And when you are wrought to this Humiliation for, and hatred of Sin, you will easily be brought to the next part of your Work, which is, *stedfastly to resolve by the Grace of God, never more to give willing entertainment to the same, but to be entirely devoted to God by Jesus Christ, to love, please, and serve him all your days.* I have told you how at the Lord's Supper you renew your Covenant, to perform those Duties which you were engaged to, by being Baptized into the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Renouncing carnal self, you profess to place your Happiness in the Love of God, and no farther to regard or please your selves, than is consistent with his Pleasure: Renouncing the World, your own Abilities, Righteousness and Worthiness, and all ways to Happiness, which are set up against Christ, you profess to take him alone for your Redeemer, and to resign up your selves to him, that he may bring you to the Fruition of God; and therefore Renouncing the Devil, who would draw you from God and Christ, to gratifie your Lusts with Earthly Things, you profess your Resolutions to be led by the Holy Spirit of God, in those ways that lead to his Everlasting Kingdom. You who are truly willing to all this, (for so such I speak) I would have you in the most serious manner, to profess the same before God, and especially in the Prayers that you make, in Preparation for the Sacrament. Bind your selves over to him by the strictest Vow, that he shall be your God, and you will be his People. Profess to him that he shall be the Portion of your Souls, that you will

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have none in Heaven but him, and will desire nothing on Earth in comparison of him ; that if he will but vouchsafe you his saving Love in Jesus Christ, you shall be indifferent to all Things here below, as knowing that in his Favour alone you are abundantly provided for. Acknowledge his Right to govern you, and dispose of you, being your Maker and Preserver, infinitely wise and good ; and engage to take him for your Sovereign and Lord, to render a sincere, unlimited Obedience to his Commands, and quietly to submit to his Dispensations. Profess to him, that you relinquish all Right to your selves, and give up all into his Hands, to do with you what he pleaseth ; consecrating all to his Glory, whatever he doth or shall afford you, being resolved, through his Assistance, so to improve and employ it. Promise to him, that neither your own Will, nor the Will of any Mortal Man, shall be obey'd in contradiction to his. And bethink your selves of those Sins, whereof you have been more especially guilty, in Thought, Word, or Deed ; and of the Duties you have omitted : And engage your selves particularly against those Sins, and to the performance of those Duties. And then remember under what notion you enter into Covenant with God, and what kind of Creatures you are, even poor lost Sinners, loaded with much Guilt, which you could never, by any Satisfaction of your own making, take off from your selves ; and also exceeding weak, so that you cannot by your own Strength give that Obedience to God which he requires, nor vanquish the Difficulties which you will meet with ; wherefore it is of absolute necessity that you accept of Jesus Christ, as your *Deliverer* and *Strength* : *For he only who hath the Son, hath the Father also.* Profess then before God your unfeigned willingness to close with the Lord J E S U S, to all those Ends for which he offers himself to the World. Acknowledge to him, that you neither expect Mercy for any Merit of your own, nor set upon Duty in your own Might, nor look for acceptance of any Service



vice for its own worth, but that you humbly depend upon Christ the Mediator for all that you stand in need of: Acknowledge his Right to rule over and in you, as having bought you out of Slavery with his own most precious Blood, to whose mild and gracious Government you will therefore submit your selves. Profess your willingness and earnest desire to have your Hearts purged and sanctified by his Holy Spirit, and your Lives thereby directed according to the Precepts of the Gospel. Thus profess your acceptance of Christ, and submission to the Spirit, that you may be brought into the Favour of God, and be enabled to please and glorifie him by your holy Conversation: For all tends to this, even to make you holy in Heart and Life. Therefore are we married to Christ, that we may bring forth Fruit unto God, Rom. 7. 4. And the Fruits of Righteousness are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God, Phil. 1. 11. In him we are created unto good Works. This is the effect of his Death and Resurrection, that we might be dead to Sin, but alive unto God, Rom. 6. throughout. They are Christ's Disciples that bring forth much Fruit to the Glory of God the Father, John 15. 8. And therefore is the Spirit of Life given us through Jesus Christ, that we may be made free from the Power of Sin and Death, that the carnal Mind might be taken away, and we made subject to God, and able to please him; yea, that we might rise up to an higher kind of Life, more Spiritual and Heavenly than was ordinarily attainable under the Law, Rom. 8. the former part of that Chapter. This being then the sum of all, to devote your selves to God by Jesus Christ, to live in his Love and Fear, and in strict Obedience to his Laws, till you shall be taken to Glory; you that are firmly purposed to do this, and have made Promises thereof betwixt God and your own Souls, do you eat the Bread, and drink the Wine in the Sacrament, as a Confirmation of these Promises. Let this be remembred, I beseech you, whatever you forget, That hereby you do most straightly engage your selves

to live a Righteous, Sober and Godly Life, from this very day, and to the end of your days. This some give as the reason, why the Name *Sacrament* is put upon Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because they are of a like Nature with that Oath, which Souldiers were wont to take to be obedient to their General, and rather to dye than to forsake their Colours; which Military Oath was called a *Sacrament*; and thus both by Baptism and the Lord's Supper are we consecrated to the Service of God. A very Heathen anciently, when he gave an account of the Practice of the Christians, said of them, that they did sometimes in their Assemblies, by eating and drinking together, engage one another to abstain from Theft, Murder, Adultery, and all kind of Wickedness; so right a Notion he had of the Design of this Duty. Imagine then you heard Christ saying, *All that will hearken unto me, and become such as I would have them, both in their Hearts and Lives, let them come and take the Sacrament in witness of their resolution to cleave to me.* And let the Voice of your Soul in answer be, *Lord I am willing to hearken to thee, to take thee for my Redeemer and Lord, and it is my unfeigned desire to be holy as thou wouldst have me; it is my resolution from this time forward, by the help of thy Spirit, to yield a sincere Obedience to all thy Commands, and not allow my self in any known Sin, whilst Life shall last; and in witness hereof I take this Sacrament, which thou hast call'd me to.* And thus thou dost plight thy Troth to Jesus Christ, by partaking of these consecrated Elements, as Friends are wont to break a piece of Silver betwixt them, to bind each other the faster to the Promises they make; or as the Man and Woman express their Consent to Marriage, by their use of the Ring. And hereby thou dost in effect profess, that thou expectest Salvation by Christ upon no other terms, than as thou shalt be found faithful in making and keeping this Covenant with him. Thou may'st easily perceive this is no trifling matter, and therefore good reason there is, I should advise thee to be serious  
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and deliberate in it, lest by thy Hypocrisie thou should'st even bind over thy self to Damnation : For if thy Heart will not consent to such a Covenant as I have described, think not I go about to perswade thee to dissemble with God. But yet remember, there is nothing in all this, that may afford any ground of hesitation or doubting, whether thou should'st do it or not, unless thou art in doubt, whether thou hadst best be sav'd or damn'd : For except thy Heart be brought to such a subjection to, and closure with Christ, it's impossible thou should'st ever be saved by him. This Wedding-garment of Faith and Obedience, which I would have thee put on, is as necessary for thy being received into Heaven, as for thy being a welcome Guest at this Table. And by the way consider how you have endangered your Souls, you who have from time to time received Sacraments, and never thought of any such Engagement as this ; which yet the very action it self layes upon you, nor ever took care to be faithful thereto. In what a daring manner have you laid your selves open to Vengeance ? And how great is that Patience which hath hitherto bore with you ? Even whilst you have been wilfully guilty of most horrid Perjury. I mention not this to drive you to Despair, no, there is yet hope of Mercy concerning this thing, if now at length you are but sensible of your miscarriage, and will carefully reform it for the future.

Whoever you are, that do now from your very Hearts render up your selves to God by your Redeemer, doubt not of a gracious Acceptance : You that with such designs do assemble to this Supper, (and none else are fit to come there) of you will Christ say, when he looks upon you, as once of his Disciples who sat about him, *Behold my Mother and my Brethren*, Mark 3. 34. for as he there adds, *ver. 35. Whosoever shall do the Will of God, the same is his Brother, Sister and Mother.* Yea, to you will the Lord Almighty say, *I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my Sons and Daughters*, 2 Cor. 6. 18. and safely may you regard your selves in this comfortable

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nearness of Relation to him, which brings me to the next.

5. You that are thus truly humbled for Sin, and turned from it to God by Jesus Christ, upon good grounds may, and ought to believe, that God will make good all the promises of his Covenant, which he hath made to such as you are. Whereupon you may with an holy boldness beg the same at his hands, and accordingly do it. Humbly beseech him to deal with you according to those Gracious Promises, wherein he hath caused you to trust. And for the strengthening of your Faith, consider some of the chief of them, and plead them with God in Prayer, and beg the Blessings contained therein. Pray earnestly that the *Blood of Christ* may cleanse you from all *Unrighteousness*, that your *Iniquities* may be remembered no more, but that you may have *Peace* with him, being freely justified by his Grace. Beseech him to give you his *Holy Spirit*, to carry on the work of Faith with Power, to enable you against Temptations of all sorts, to fill you with Peace and Joy, to lead you in the way wherein he would have you to walk, and to perform that good thing he hath begun in you to the day of Jesus. Pray that you may be found in Christ, at that great approaching Day, and may stand before him with Boldness, and be discharged from all Accusations, and set with the Sheep on his Right-hand, and with that little Flock be received into the Kingdom, which he hath promised to all that love him. And since you are as yet in the Body, which stands in need of outward Comforts and Supplies, and are in a World where you have Relations, Friends and Affairs, wherein you are concern'd, you have Promises touching these also; and may therefore confidently beg your Heavenly Father, who knows what you need, to take care of you and yours, and furnish you with what he sees convenient for you; to direct you in all difficulties, and by his Providence so to order all your Affairs as may tend most to his Glory, and your Good. Ask these things of God, and whatever you perceive

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necessary, and doubt not but they shall be given unto you more abundantly than you can ask or think, and look upon them as confirmed to you by the Sacrament. But remember always, that it is for Christ's sake that these Mercies are confer'd upon you, so that you are to acknowledge your selves unworthy of the least of them, and confels if you had your own desert, you should be strip of all Comforts, and be laid under the greatest Miseries. Profess therefore all that you hope for is on the account of Jesus Christ, who hath purchast all things needful for the Happiness of his People, after a Forfeiture was made of all by the Fall of *Adam*: Through him are these good things promised, and these Promises fulfilled. In the New Covenant founded in his Blood, they all accompany his Person, and are ascertained to those that cordially receive him, as the Wife by taking a Nobleman to her Husband, is made partaker of his Estate and Honours. So that having Christ to be yours, all that is in Heaven or Earth to do you good is yours also, by vertue of that Covenant which shall never fail: Faithful is he that hath promised, *and will do it.*

Wherefore this Sacrament which you are about to receive, being a Seal of that Covenant, you are to take it as an assurance and pledge, that all the Blessings of it, such things as I directed you to pray for, shall be bestowed upon you, in that time and order which God sees best. Here then you see is work for Faith, if you would receive the Comfort which this Ordinance holds forth. And more particularly, I shall tell you in two words, what it is for principally, and in what manner you are here to exercise Faith.

1. *Look upon the Sacrament as sealing to you a full and free Pardon of all the Sins you stand in need of, whether by nature or practice, so that none of them shall be laid to your Charge, so as to condemn you at Judgment. And for your clearer proceeding herein, you are to apprehend the Sacrament as join'd to the promise of Pardon in the Gospel, and so to look upon it as a Seal annex'd*

to a Writing, that promiset<sup>h</sup> Mercy to Rebels that submit themselves : And if a King should send his Officers with many such Writings to a Company of Men that were risen up in Arms against him, and the Officer should tell them, Sir, here's a gracious Message sent you from the King, here are Papers under his own hand, wherein he assures a Pardon to such of you that will now come in; and here's also his own Seal put to them for your greater Assurance; all which for your Security, I'll put into your hand presently, if you submit your selves. They who upon this come in, and take these Papers, have a Pardon thereby given them, which they may boldly produce, if afterwards they should be accused. Even thus are you to conceive God's Embassador saying to you: All you that are willing to receive Jesus Christ to rule over you, and save you, he hath promised in his Gospel to forgive you all your Sins, and (beside that of Baptism) hath ordained the Sacrament of his Supper, as a Seal of this gracious Promise, his Instrument of Pardon; and here I stand by his Appointment to give out the same. You now who find your selves willing thus to receive Christ, are to take this Sacrament as an assurance that this Promise shall be made good to you; and so look upon it, and with this quiet your Conscience, when it is unjustly clamorous, and silence Satan when he haunts you with Temptations to despair: Then say within thy self, here's the Word of God assuring Forgiveness to all that take Christ for their Lord and Saviour, which by his Grace I find my self inclined and enabled to do, and he hath bound this Word with his Oath, and to both he hath added his Sacraments as Seals, and shall this three-fold Cord be broken, what should give me Satisfaction, if this do not? Wherefore be gone, Satan, shall I not rather believe thou art a Lyar, who tellest me, repent and believe, and do all that I can, my Sins are so great they can never be forgiven, than once suspect that the most true God, will ever revoke that which he hath said, and sworn, and sealed to? And at the great Judgment Day



Christ will own his *Hand and Seal*, and then solemnly acquit thee, whom he now pardons by his Gospel. Safely then may'st thou triumph with the Apostle, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect?* It's God that justifieth: *Who is he that condemneth?* It's Christ that dyed, &c. And this Christ with his whole Purchase is made over to thee, Oh believing Soul. Even by this Sacrament is his Blood as effectually made thine, to wash off all the Guilt that cleaves to thee, as if thou hadst been bath'd in his warm Blood to that purpose, yea, much more effectually.

2. The other Direction I would give you is, *That you take the Sacrament as an earnest of the Everlasting Glory*, which shall shortly without question be vouchsaf'd to you who remain stedfast in your Covenant with God. Here in like manner you are to look upon the Gospel as a *Deed of Gift*, whereby, through Christ, an *Inheritance* in the Heavens is settled upon you, to which *Deed* also the Sacrament doth *seal*. Even as an House is made over by the delivery of a *Key*, and Land by a *Turf*, so there is a kind of Conveyance of Heaven it self made to you by the delivery of the Sacramental Bread and Wine into your Hands. And when you receive them, imagine you heard God saying to you, *Here poor Soul, take this in Earnest of that Eternal Life, which I have prepared for, and will bestow upon thee.* And if the Heavenly Kingdom be thus assured to you, on Condition of your continuance in the Love of God, you need not question but all things needful for your Passage thither, are herein comprehended. If you shall have *Glory* given you, then be sure you shall have that *Grace* which may fit you for, and bring you to it; wherefore I shall speak particularly under the next Head. And if you are thus richly provided for as to your Souls, do you think your Bodies shall be neglected? No, never fear it; what ever shall be found really good for you, shall be vouchsaf'd. What shall you have Christ and his Spirit, Grace and Glory? And do you question whether you shall have

have Food and Raiment? Will the Father make his Son Heir of all when he comes to Age, and will he not afford him a Maintenance till then? Only refer all your Concernments to God, to deal with you as he shall think fit, and question not but he'll dispose of all to your Contentment, if you be reasonable. The whole World is in the Hands of your Father, and it is not for want of Power or Love, if you have not the greatest share in it; but it is from his Wisdom and Mercy, which will rather give you the best. *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for you, and hath given him to you, how shall he not with him freely give you all things?* Rom. 8. 32. Would you have a larger word? Is there any thing you want, not contained in this? The like you may see, 1 Cor. 3: 21, 22. *Things present and things to come, all are yours, ye being Christs.* And as Godliness thus hath the Promises of this Life, and that which is to come, so both sorts of Promises are here confirmed to you by the Sacrament, which is a Seal of that full Covenant, wherein Blessings both of the right hand and of the left, are given to Believers.

You may see then, I hope, by this time, that this is no common Bread and Wine which is appointed for so great purposes. If a Twig was given into your hands, whereby some great Estate was conveyed to you, you would value it sure above a common Stick. Wherefore if you would not be lamentably wanting to your selves, and Enemies to your own Comforts, I beseech you, all you that love the Lord Jesus, know your own Privileges, and fix these things firmly in your Minds; and let not the greatness of them hinder your Belief, since they are as sure as great; but see that you apprehend a reality in all that is done at this holy Table. See Christ himself in the Minister, see also the Benefits that come by Christ in the Bread and Wine, and stedfastly believe that these are given you by Christ, as verily as the Elements are given you by the Minister. For *Pardon and Right to Eternal Life*, are things to be believed, not felt,

so that it is by believing that you must receive the Comfort of them. Wherefore, beg of God to clear up these Things to your Apprehensions, to remove Doubtings, to strengthen your Faith, and to join the inward Seal of his Spirit, to the outward Administration of his Ordinance. And do you take the boldness, though with the greatest Humility, to profess to God, that you take this Sacrament as an *Earnest* of all those Mercies which you hope for from his Bounty, as hereby you deliver up your selves, and all that you have and are, to his Will and Pleasure. And as an *Earnest* engageth both the Master and Servant, to do according to their agreement, so is God graciously pleased hereby to engage himself to his Creatures; so that not only from his Bounty, but from his Justice and Faithfulness, may you expect whatever he hath promised to do for you. There being thus, a Sacred Covenant transacted betwixt God and your Souls, see only that you be not treacherous, and Heaven and Earth shall sooner fail, than God will depart from one tittle of all that he hath said. With confidence may you look upon God as your Father, Christ as your Head and Husband, the Holy Spirit as your Comforter and Guide, the Angels as your Friends ready at Christ's Command to do you Service, the Saints in both Worlds as your Brethren; and the full Enjoyment of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the joyful Communion of Saints and Angels, your assured Everlasting Portion.

6. Since you in your selves are poor impotent Creatures, who *without Christ can do nothing*, but must be beholden to that Grace, which drew you to this Covenant to hold you in it, and to help you to perform your part; and since there is of this Grace, even now to be given but to the prepared Soul, *Let it be your care to get very sensible of your Spiritual Wants, and to come hither earnestly desiring and expecting a Supply.* Consider well with your selves, what Graces you find weakest and most wanting, what Duties you are prone most to fail

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in, and humbly beg suitable Help and Assistance. Examine what Temptations you are most exposed to, and of these overcome by, what Corruptions you find yet strongest in you, and especially what those Sins are too which you are inclined most by Nature, and Custom, or are most in danger of by your Employments or Conversation in the World, and represent all this in your Prayers before God, and beg of him more Power and Strength against them, and now by this Ordinance to convey it to you. Look round about, and consider well the Work you have to do, the Difficulties you are to grapple with, the several Relations wherein you stand, the Duties they bring along with them, and now sue out for direction and assistance in all. And for your encouragement remember what I told you, that God hath engag'd himself to all you his Covenant-People, to afford you what ever may conduce to your Happiness; now since you stand in present need of the supplies of his Grace, you may confidently expect the same. He that will bring you to the end, will give you the means. As if a King should call some of his poor Subjects, to give them great Possessions in another Country which he had conquered, and should also furnish them with store of Money and Provisions for the way, even thus bounteously will God deal with you. Oh Believers! He'll put Strength into your Feet, and revive your fainting Spirits, that you may hold on your way; you that wait upon the Lord, though you have no Power and Might in your selves, yet shall renew your Strength, and run and not be weary, and walk and not faint, till you come to your Journeys end.

By Faith in Christ we are ingrafted into him, as a Branch into the Vine, and are related as a Member to the Head, so that he is become the Root of our Life, and from him shall Sap and Nourishment be communicated to our needy Souls. He is the Dispenser and Fountain of Grace, and his Ordinances are as Conduit-pipes and Conveyances of the same. And of this Nature is

the Lord's Supper. Here Believers are made to *drink into the Spirit*, 1 Cor. 12. 13. Which words have a plain reference to this Sacrament, Baptism being mentioned at the beginning of the Verse. Come hither then, O ye thirsty Souls, and be refresh'd with the Waters of Life that shall flow in upon you in abundance. Open your Mouths wide, and they shall be filled. Be not straightned in your selves, for the Bowels of Christ are not straightned towards you. Bring hither capacious enlarged Hearts, and you shall carry away accordingly. The anointing of the Spirit, which is shed abroad upon you, is like the Widows Oyl, 2 Kings 4. 6. it will not stay running whilst there is room to receive it. Oh why is it then that we are so empty? The Fault is not in Christ, we must needs acknowledge. But let us examine whether we have not stuff our Hearts with other things, that leave little or no room for Grace to be poured in there. Are we not fill'd with the love of Earthly Things? Is not our Delight most of all in Profits and Pleasures? And our Desires eagerly carried out after them? Do not Creature-comforts so possess and fill us, that they even thrust forth the Holy Spirit from his Habitation? Do we not grieve him by our carnal Joys, and cause him to withdraw from us? Oh! For shame let it be no longer thus with us. Alas! how little can these narrow Hearts of ours contain of the Fullness of God, though they were widened to their utmost present Capacity? And shall we pinch and straighten them yet more, by entertaining every trifle there? This is that Room which the King of Heaven would have entire to himself, and shall every common Guest, every Beggar be lodged there? Is it fit that Money-changers and Merchants should fill the House of God? That it should be a Thorow-fare for every Vessel, every common and unclean Thing? Oh let your Hearts then be consecrated as Temples for the Holy Ghost, not Dens of such Thieves as rob God of his due, and draw away those Desires and Affections which he claims as his own. And now let

let the Gates of those Temples fly open, that the King of Glory may come in. Now in an especial manner let your Hearts be emptied of all Trash, that they may be fill'd with the good Things which are here distributed. If you were set to an heap of Gold, and bidden to carry away as much as you could grasp, you would keep no Dirt nor Stones in your Hand, that would make them hold so much the less. Loosen your selves then from the inordinate Love or Thought of any created Good, your Houses or Lands, your Pleasures or Employment; withdraw your Minds as much as possible from all Temporal Concernments, with which whilst you are taken up, the edge of your desire after Heavenly Things is extreemly abated. And if you come not further with great Expectations, you are like to be little the better. If you have no higher Designs, but with a little seeming Devotion to eat Bread, and drink Wine, then Bread and Wine are the best Things that you are like to meet with. For is it probable you should find that which you never look after? But if thou comest hither with an holy greediness after greater measures of Grace, thirsting for the Living God, as the Hart pants after the Water-brooks, and as the parched Ground gapes for the refreshing Showers, then fear it not, thy Desires shall be gratified. Thou canst not please God better, than by looking for the greatest and best Things from him, which bring most Glory to himself, and do most Good to thy Soul. Beg earnestly then that by the Power of his Spirit accompanying this Ordinance, thou may'st partake yet more of a new and Divine Nature; that thou may'st find Strength and Vigour diffused thorough the whole Man, and may'st now receive some Communications of that Light and Life, which Christ came into the World that his People might have, and that they might have it more abundantly; now pray that his Death and Resurrection may have their Power and Efficacy upon thee, that Verrue may issue forth from him for thy healing. Beg, that by this Food thy  
Lusts



Lusts may be poisoned and destroy'd, and every Grace strengthened and increas'd. And be particular in thy Desires. (Oh that something may be done this Day against my Pride and Passion, my Worldliness and Sensuality, my distrustful Fears and Discontents.) Oh that I may be delivered from that Listlessness, Dulness, and Distraction, wherewith I am haunted in holy Duties. Oh that I may find my Heart hereby drawn nearer to God, and carried out with more unweariedness and cheerfulness in his Service? That I may be better enabled for a conscientious discharge of my Duty, in every place and relation that I do stand in, and in the whole course of my Life. Blessed God, thou who knowest the state of my Soul, give unto me, I beseech thee, what thou seest I need most. I have an hard Heart, Lord soften it; a dead Heart, Lord enliven it; I am much in the dark, Lord lift thou up the Light of thy Countenance upon me. Make me more Humble, Holy, and Heavenly: Oh take this season for coming in upon my Soul, and bestowing more of thy self upon me, that I may become more like to thee. These, O God, are Mercies thou hast promised to thy People, and bidden them to ask; these thou art wont to convey by thine Ordinances; for these Things therefore do I wait upon thee this Day; with no lower Aims do I come to thy Table; with such precious Things is the Lord Jesus wont to feast his Guest, and of his infinite Fulness it is, that I hope to participate; through him it is I hope to be strengthened with Might in my inner Man, even to be made strong by the Grace that is in Christ Jesus. Oh, will the Head let a Member perish? Shall a Branch wither for want of Succour and Juice? Blessed Saviour, thou who wast so willing to shed thy Blood for us, art thou not as willing to bestow the Fruits of it upon us? Art thou not still as merciful and tender as ever thou wast? Thou who didst once so readily heal Diseases, and cure all that come to thee, hast thou not as much Mercy to Souls as to Bodies? Lord, I believe thou art

as able and ready to help as ever? *If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean*, and it is my hope that thou wilt. Outward Means without thee cannot do it, yet here thou hast bid us attend, and thus I do, waiting for the descent of thy Holy Spirit. Oh grant the Requests of thy poor Creature: Say unto me, *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt*; yea, even as thou wilt, O Lord, let it be unto me, who art ever readily and strongly inclined to do thy People good. Thus stir up your selves, and actuate Faith in such holy Breathings as these, and be assured, such additions of Grace as you are fitted for, and God in his infinite Wisdom seems meet at present to deal out, shall be confer'd upon you; and being refreshed and strengthned with this Banquet, you may chearfully walk on your way to Glory.

7. From all that hath been said of the greatness of the Mercies here commemorated, bestow'd and sealed to, it will appear most reasonable and just, *that the Hearts of all God's faithful Servants should here be raised to the greatest height of Divine Love, Thankfulness and Joy*. I put these together, because though in the Notion they are different, yet in the Workings of the Soul they usually go together. That same Goodness which works Love and Thankfulness, causeth Joy too, as it's begun to be enjoyed, or strongly hop'd for; and this is a frame most proper to a Communicant, all his Preparations being much in order to it: Therefore should he get sensible of his Misery, and humbled for his Sin; that he may have the more affectionate thankful sence of the Mercy that pitied and pardoned him. Wherefore labour much with your selves, even before-hand, to rise up to this ingenuous and pleasant Temper, which will prove so acceptable both to God and your selves. Dwell intently upon that amazing Mercy, which God hath revealed to Mankind in Jesus Christ, which thing the *Angels themselves desire to look into*: Ponder well the several heightning Circumstances thereof; the meanness, sinfulness and misery of Man, the Majesty of God, the Dignity

Dignity of Christ, the greatness of his Condescension and Sufferings, the fulness and freeness of his Purchase and Offers. Study all his dealings with your selves in particular, whereby he hath accomplish'd in you the designs of his Love, and continue these musings, till you feel a Fire of Love and Joy kindled within you. Let not Satan so far have his Will of you as to cast you into these Dejections, and groundless Perplexities, which will rob God of his Praise, and you of your Comfort. Let him not be able to perswade you that God is cruel and unmerciful, and hardly reconciled to returning Sinners: Have you not the strongest and most unanswerable demonstration at hand, to confute him? Would you desire, or can you have a greater evidence of the graciousness of his Nature, than that very Mercy which you are going to remember? Even his giving his only Son to dye for us, whilst we were yet *ungodly* and *Enemies*. And did he of his own Free Grace, without our asking, and against our deserving, provide a Saviour for us, and is he yet unwilling to save us? Did he find out a Means for our Reconciliation to himself, and is he now backward to be reconciled? Does he now importune us to take that which he is unwilling to give us? Be not, I beseech you, of such an easie belief of the Devil's gross Fallacies, and so hardly drawn to believe what God hath not only said, but done, so much to make it past all doubtings. See the Apostle arguing much after the same manner, *Rom. 5. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.* Oh let your Hearts then be fill'd with admiration of that Love which God hath herein exprest to Men, the wondrous greatness whereof is such, that it almost surpasseth our Faith, and doth far surpass our full Comprehension. That there should be a way for the recovery of self-destroying Sinners, contrived by him whom they had offended, and brought about by the Death of his own Son, that they might be raised to the highest Happiness, even an Eternity of the most ravishing Joys, in nearest Communion with the Divine Majesty, and all  
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this to be had for a cordial thankful acceptance: *This is the Lord's doing, and well may it be marvellous in your Eyes: Great things hath the Lord done for us, whereof let our Souls be glad.* If an Host of Angels came from Heaven to proclaim these good Tidings of great Joy to all People, shall not the Congregations of Christians echo back their *Glory be to God in the highest, who hath sent on Earth Peace, and shewn such good Will to Men? Ob give Thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, and his Mercy endureth for ever. Let the Redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the Enemy. Ob do you praise the Lord for his Goodness, and for his wonderful Works to the Children of Men; who hath shewn Mercy to such as sit in Darknes, and in the shadow of Death, and hath broken the gates of Brass, and cut the bars of Iron in sunder, and hath sent his Word and healed you, and delivered you from Destruction. Ob do you sacrifice the Sacrifices of Thanksgiving, and declare his Works with rejoycing, Psal. 107.* Call upon your Souls with the Psalmist in another place, *Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name: Bless the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits, who forgiveth thine Iniquities, and healeth all thy Diseases; who redeems thy Life from Destruction, and who crowns thee with Loving-kindness and tender Mercies, Psal. 103.* at the beginning, Ob think what a deplorable Condition we had been in, if God had left us in the hands of Satan, to whom we had enslaved our selves, and had never look'd after us more. O what a Dungeon had this World then been! Where we should have lived in Darknes and Fetters, in Horrors and Torments, and all as but an infer and passage to Miseries infinitely worse, and altogether unavoidable. But O blessed, and for ever praised be his Name, who hath visited the Earth with his Goodness, and caused the rejoycing Light to shine in dark and disconsolate Places, and hath proclaimed Liberty to the Captive, and shewn a strong hold, to which he hath called the *Prisoners of Hope* to turn themselves, having laid

laid help on one that is mighty, sending forth the Pri-  
 soners out of the Pir by the Blood of the Covenant, Zach.  
 9. 1. This is that Blood which by the Wine in the Sa-  
 crament is represented to you, yea, which is thereby  
 put into your hands, and given you to drink, in remem-  
 brance of that which was once shed for you. And shall  
 not the Hearts blood of your dearest Lord warm and  
 revive your Souls, enflame and advance your Love?  
 Will you not now begin that new Song of the Heavenly  
 Choir, ascribing Blessing, Honour, Glory and Power to him  
 that sits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and  
 ever, who by his Blood redeemed us, and makes us Kings  
 and Priests unto God, Rev. 5. This is that Blood to  
 which you owe all that you have or hope for: This  
 quench'd those Flames which else had fed upon you for  
 ever: This satisfied that Justice, which else had laid  
 hold on you for your Disobedience: This purchas'd an  
 Inheritance, which Silver and Gold could not buy: This  
 purgeth the Conscience from dead Works, and makes the  
 Soul fruitful unto God: This pacifies the Conscience,  
 and appeaseth the disturbances that sense of Guilt is apt  
 to raise: By this Blood of the Lamb, it is, that the Saints  
 in all their Conflicts do overcome. And can you with-  
 hold the most affectionate hearty Thankfulness for this  
 precious all-healing Blood? Methinks we should even  
 be pained in our selves, as not knowing how to give  
 vent enough to our Affections, especially when our  
 bleeding Lord is set before us. O let him wholly pos-  
 sess your Thoughts, and do you view that transcendent  
 Love which he manifested in his whole course, but chief-  
 ly in the close of it, that all may beget in you some an-  
 swerable returns of Love. Read, as you have leisure,  
 those Heavenly Discourses which were his Farewel Ser-  
 mons to his Disciples, and his last Prayer for them;  
 which you may find in the 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th  
 Chapters of John, and see there how Love breathes in  
 every line. Follow him to the Garden, and there hear-  
 ken to his Groans, and behold his bloody Sweat, which  
 pro-

proclaims him to be *fiel of Love*, of a Love that would not be quench'd by those crimson Streams. No, still he goes on, and go thou after him with the Woman that followed him to his Cross; and weep not, if thou canst forbear, whilst there thou seest him *dye for Love*; even for Love of thee, poor Soul, who dost sincerely love him. Art thou not astonish'd at the thoughts of it? What could the Lord Jesus see in such miserable Worms as we, that should incline him to undergo all this on our behalf? Nay, there's the wonder, he saw nothing, and therefore he underwent it. Nothing, did I say? Yes, he saw our Guilt and Defilement; for which he might have justly loathed us. But he seeing all this our Milery, was rather moved to a Compassion for us: Such a Compassion as never dwelt in Mortals Breast, that he should pity those who pitied not themselves, and dye to recover those who had even murdered themselves; yea, that he should dye to make them happy, whose Sins were the cause of his Death, and even merit Mercy for such as had no Mercy on him, and give *Life* to them who took *his* away. All this was voluntarily done by the Son of God, who became Man, on purpose that he might dye, and do all this for the Sons of Men. Let Plays and Fictions be hift off the Stage, let Romantick Follies be shamed into Obscurity. For here is that which alone deserves the name of *Love*; here's such Truth, as commands our Belief; such Worth and Weight as calls for our Regard, and such stupendious Greatness, as may raise our Wonder. Here behold the power of Love in the fairest display of it that ever was made to the World, since its Foundations were first laid, beyond which Imagination it self cannot ascend, nay, which falls vastly short of it; how vastly short then doth Expression fall? But yet O that we could feel as much as that little which we speak! Was it ever before known that the Shepherd should lay down his Life for his Sheep? Not for innocent Sheep, but to reduce wilful straglers to his Fold: That he who was Lord of all, should dye  
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for his Subjects? Not for obedient Subjects, but for Rebels appointed to the slaughter? Thus continue thy Meditations, till they have to good an effect upon thee, that if Christ should appear to thee at this instant, as thou art got alone, and should call thee by Name, as once he did *Peter*, and ask thee, *Soul, Lovest thou me?* thou mightest be able truly to return this answer, *Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.* And then to affect thee yet more, consider of God's saving Love in Christ particularly revealed to thy Soul, that he was pleased to say to thee, *when thou wast in thy Blood, Live;* Calling thee out of Darkness into his marvellous Light, laying hold on thee by his Spirit, and recovering thee to himself, when thou wast running far away from him; and many a time preventing and restoring thee by his Grace, when otherwise thou hadst utterly ruin'd thy self. O praise him that he left thee not in Satan's Kingdom, under the Power of thy Lusts, but with a strong Hand and outstretched Arm brought thee out of that House of Bondage, and magnifie his Name when thou beholdest that Blood wherein thy Sins were drowned, as the *Egyptians* in the Red Sea. O bleis his Name that he did not suffer thee to remain *dead in Trespasses and Sins*, yea, that he did not strike thee dead in them, and sentence thee to the second Death, after which there is Life no more. This is a fit season for recollecting all the special Mercies of thy Life, which God hath shewn either to Soul or Body, to thy self or thine, all which thou art to look upon as vouchsafed through Christ, which makes the Mercy infinitely greater.

And when you have thus endeavoured to get your Hearts brim-full with Love and Joy, come and let them rise higher, and boil over at the Table of the Lord. Let no sadness appear in your Looks, nor a tormenting thought by your good will, seize upon your Hearts this day. Come *loathing* Sin as much as you are able, but come *loving* Christ as much; have as *low* thoughts of thy self as thou wilt, and be as *humble* as thou canst in

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remembrance of all thy vileness, but yet let thy *Soul magnifie the Lord, and thy Spirit rejoyce in God thy Saviour.* Thy Gracious Lord will not upbraid thee with any former unkindness and neglect of his love, which thou art heartily asham'd of and sorry for. Wherefore though thou maist come blushing and weeping, yet come not into his presence daunted and desparing. He died on purpose to ease your Souls of those fears, which make you *all your life time subject unto bondage.* Will not you receive comfort, for whom he hath shed his Blood that it might be your Cordial? Let him see you then improve it this Day to that purpose: For your Health and Pleasure, if it be solid, is his delight. And if he would have your joy at any time in this World full, now it is; If you must *ever more rejoyce,* this I am sure, is a fit season. This is our most solemn *Thanksgiving Feast.* Oh wonderful! That the commemoration of the *Masters* Death should be the *Servants* Feast. It is his pleasure to have it so, and let us thankfully comply therewith. Instead of his Vinegar and Gall, he gives us Bread and Wine, and better things than they. Here he made according to his promise, *Isa. 25. 6. A Feast of fat things, a feast of Wines on the Lees, of fat things full of Marrow, Wines on the Lees, well refined.* And you may be sure, the Master of this Feast, who entertains his guests with an affection as great as their fare is costly, would not have them sit there sad and dejected, as if they liked not their provisions, or thought themselves not welcome. Would it please you to see your friends in such a posture at your Table? Oh question not your welcome, all ye lovers of Christ, but when you are there assembled, imagine that you heard him say to you, *Eat oh friends, drink, yea drink abundantly, oh beloved.* Here he hath brought you into his Banqueting-House, and his Banner over you shall be love. Here will he comfort you with Heavenly *Manna*, and stay with Flaggons all you that are sick of love. You Children of *Abraham*, that come from the slaughter of your

Lusts, here doth your Lord meet you as his type (*Melchisedeck*) met your Father, *Gen. 14. 18.* Setting before you the Bread and Wine for your refreshment. And here *will he bless you*: He shall cause you to sit under his shadow, and his fruit shall be sweet to your taste. Here may you expect the most comfortable communion with Christ, that is to be had in this lower World. Here then *believing in and loving him whom you have not seen*, but whom you may here see represented, do you *rejoyce with joy unspeakable, and full of Glory.*

8. That your Hearts may be more heavenly in this work, and so more apt to be fill'd with joy, and to break out in praise, let me earnestly desire you *here to have an eye to a glorified, as well as a Crucified Christ*, to remember not only his humiliation, but his exaltation. It was the mind of Christ, that his Resurrection, rather than his birth or death, should consecrate a weekly thanksgiving, to be observed by the Church in all Ages, which should be call'd the Lords own Day, and be spent in his praise and service. This being the accomplishment of his labours, his final Victory over Death and the Grave, and all enemies that did assault his own Person, the memorial whereof must therefore needs be most rejoycing to his Servants: And as his Resurrection cannot be remembered without his birth and death, which must of necessity precede it, no more can his death be here rightly remembered, without we also bear in mind his Resurrection and Ascension to Glory. Can we remember what he was, and not think what he is? Sad meetings had we made indeed if our Lord had been held under the power of Death, if such a thing may be imagined: All the World then might well be in the disconsolate posture of the two Disciples, that were travailing to *Emaus*, crying out, *We trusted this had been he who should have redeemed Israel*, *Luk. 24. 21.* Then would our faith be vain, we should be yet in our sins. But we may now comfort our selves, and use the Apostles gradation, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of Gods Elect? it's Christ that died,*

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yea rather *that's risen again, and is even at the right Hand of God.* And now with joy let this Resurrection and Glory be remembered, as being the forerunner of yours, when in your thoughts you have descended as low as his Grave, and there stand weeping to think how your Sins have slain him, imagine you heard some Angel bespeaking you, in almost the same Language that he did the Woman at his Sepulchre, *Mark 16. 6, 7.* *Fear not ye, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified; he is not here: for he is risen as he said, and is gone before you, not into Galilee, but into Heaven, there shall you see him.* When therefore you shall in this Ordinance see Christ crucified before you, think with your selves, *This is the Lamb that was dead, but is alive, and lives for ever.* By the celebrating of this Sacrament, you are to shew forth the Lord's death till he come. Remember then he is to come, for this second coming would Christ have you keep much in your Thoughts as well as his first. He left not this pledge of his love with his Church, as a dying Man leaves some gift with his Friends to put them in mind of him whom they shall never see more; but as one who goes a long journey, leaves his Picture with his Wife that she may be mindful of him in his absence, and be quickned to long after his return. And good reason have you to be mindful of the Glory of our Lord, since you your selves will be sharers herein, and so at once you remember both. Here I told you, you take an earnest of the everlasting treasures, and the consideration thereof is exceeding necessary, to raise your value of that which will otherwise appear but worthless and mean. And conceive of your selves as in a journey to that Kingdom, having here taking in by the way to refresh your selves, as travellers are wont to turn in and bait, and like the Prophet, *1 King. 19. 8.* *In the strength of this meal you are to go on toward the Mount of God.* These are provisions sent by your Joseph, to serve you by the way, till you come home to himself. Yet a few more Sacraments, and you shall be

past the need of all. Here are some fragrances and drops of sweetness for the refreshment of Pilgrims, *till the Day breaks, and the Shadows flee away, when we shall get up after our Lord to the Mountains of Myrrh, and the Hill of Frankincense.* Here a Table is spread for us in the Wilderness, and some Clusters of Grapes prest into our Cup, 'till we shall come to *Canaan*, and enjoy the Vintage. Behold in this Transaction at the Lord's Table, an Emblem and Shadow of the future Glory; and let your Thoughts take advantage from what is here presented to ascend to the joyful Contemplation thereof; yet within a while, and you who are his welcome Guests, shall sit down with your Master at his Table in his Kingdom, and there shall taste of the fruit of the Vine new with him: and shall eat of Manna that is yet hidden to you, and shall exchange your present company for the Society of innumerable Angels and perfect Saints. And let this something quiet your minds, tho' not take off the quickness of your desires, all you holy Souls, who are acted by so noble and strong a passion, that you are impatient of that distance, at which you yet find your selves from him whom you love, and are even weary of the World, where you cannot fully enjoy him, much more of your own Hearts, that are so estranged from him; comfort your selves, for within a very short while your Eyes shall behold him, and you shall be fully satisfied in your most intimate access to and abode with him. You may look back with Joy on the redemption Christ hath wrought for you, and may look before you, and *lift up your heads with joy, as knowing the Day of full and final Redemption draws nigh.* Only see that you now thirst ardently after that spiritual communion with him which is here attainable, in being possess'd by him, and closely united to him, *that being joyn'd to the Lord, you may become one Spirit:* This is the blessed, and only possible transubstantiation, to be transformed into the likeness of Christ, which is of infinitely more advantage to the believing Soul, than if, according to that monstrous

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Popish fiction, he should chew the very gross flesh, and swallow the raw blood of Christ? For by this means his *body* would be changed into ours, but by the change I speak of, our *Spirits* become like to his. And if now you hold but this Fellowship with Christ in the Spirit, shortly you shall have a *Real Presence*, even to the satisfaction of Sense it self: *Then shall you see him as he is: For you shall be made like to him in the Day of his Appearance.* Then indeed shall Sacraments vanish as useless shadows, you having got the Substance, Christ himself. You need then no more behold him in a Glass, but shall see him face to face, and be perfectly changed into his Image. Oh the difference that will be betwixt that clear sight and this dark, alas through our own fault, too dark Remembrance! Oh that's the comfort! We shall then have laid by all that stupidity and dulness which here attends us whatever we are about. That full view of our blessed Lord will for ever cure us of all coldness and unbelief, and ravish us into one eternal affectionate admiration of Divine Love. If that joy which arose from Faith and Love, whilst he was not seen, was *unspeakable and full of Glory*, how inconceivable, how transcendently glorious must that be which shall arise from his immediate sight? If it be such a precious privilege to have a right to Heaven here solemnly given us, what will it be to enter upon actual possession? Oh then, Christians, whilst you are remembering Christ at his Table, let it rejoyce your Hearts to consider, that he is remembering you at his Father's right Hand, and thither will shortly exalt you. All you whom the King of Glory now espouseth to himself as it were by Proxy, as Princes take Wives by their Ambassadors, remember that the Day is hastning, when your Marriage shall be more publickly and triumphantly solemnized: When all your blessed ones shall be call'd to the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb. *Yet a very little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry:* And do you now get your Souls mounted as high as you can climb,



by all the Means that are afforded you, and stand ever wisely looking, and diligently preparing for his Appearance; and never slack your Watch, nor let your Expectations cool, till either you see him coming in the Clouds, or your selves shall be taken up beyond them.

With some such Meditations as these, which I have suggested to you under each Head, let your Thoughts be taken up whilst you are imployed in this Duty, as you shall find your selves most inclined, and as God's Spirit shall direct you: For you need not confine your selves as to the Method and Form, but rather let your Affections have their free course. Only see that you watch narrowly over your Hearts through the whole Work, that deadness and distractions may not possess you. Keep up a strong sense of God's Presence with you, and often lift up your Hearts to him for Life and Quickning. And let all the Powers of your Souls be summoned up and engaged in this Action, with all possible vigour and closeness. Let your Minds be kept clear from slandering, and from impertinent Thoughts, that you may attend upon the Lord without distraction, and be more capable of those sweet foretastes of his Goodness, which may be as a certain Pledge of your everlasting Enjoyment of all that he hath in store for his People.

9. Lastly, Let me in a word or two direct you to be careful in the exercise of Brotherly Love. I need not stand, I hope, to repeat the Advice I gave you, to get all Breaches made up betwixt your selves and Brethren, to do all that in you lies to obtain Peace; and if that cannot be had, yet to forgive all Injuries that have been done you, and to cleanse your Minds from Rancour and Malice, and all desire of Revenge; to this let the Love of Christ constrain you.

And moreover, let your Hearts be let out with a sincere and strong Affection towards all your Fellow-members of that Body, whereof Christ is the Head. A pleasant sight it will be to your Master who is in Heaven, to look down upon you his Disciples, and see you here feasting

feasting together in mutual Love and Delight, in the remembrance of all that Love which he hath shewn to you, and in the joyful expectation of what farther he hath promised. And whilst your Love is stirred up to Christ himself, it cannot chuse but be imparted to his Friends that are in sight; such who sincerely love him, on whom he hath set his Heart, and hath shed on them his Spirit, whereby they are made like to him, and therefore must needs be lovely in your Eyes, to whom *Christ is precious*; as being also by this same Spirit made like to your selves; and when in your joining with them in this sacred action, you remember that these shall be your everlasting Companions in the Joy of your Lord, and shall there join with you in sounding forth his Praises: This will farther engage you to them, as being Heirs together of the Grace of God, and will work in you the beginnings of that Love which will hereafter be perfect and perpetual. Whilst your Love is built upon such right and catholick Principles as these, being placed upon a Christian as a Christian, you hold a Communion in the Spirit with all true Christians throughout the World; though your Affections will be most sensibly enlarged to those that you know, and with whom you hold a local Communion in the worship of God. And your joint assembling at this Table is a badge of your mutual Love, and an engagement to the firm continuance of it. Here are you made to *drink into one Spirit*, by which you were Baptized into *one Body*, according to that Text I named, *1 Cor. 12. 13.* This Sacrament is, if I may so call it, an *Holy Philtre*, whereby Believers are united in more fervent Love to their common Head, and to one another. The Blood of Christ is the only Cement and Soder of Souls. And this is that Christian Love which they are taught of God, to which they are inclined by their new Nature, and which will easily be brought into exercise, where the Grace is first wrought in the Heart; wherefore it's needless to stay longer hereon, having also spoke somewhat largely to it before.

Only one thing let me suggest, before I conclude this, namely, that you take care to give a practical Demonstration of this Love, by contributing, according to your Abilities, to the Necessities of the poor Members of Christ. This is a Sacrifice wherewith God is well pleased; a Work never out of season, but now most seasonable; being an evidence not only of your Compassion to the Poor, but of the steadfastness of your Belief in Christ, and his Promises, and of your Thankfulness for his Bounty; therefore you find both these mentioned together, *Heb. 13. 15, 16. as we must offer Thanks, so we must not forget to do good and communicate.* To quicken you to this Charity, both now and any other time, when fit Objects are presented, let me only desire you to imagine to your selves, that the Lord Jesus, who was willing to part with his Blood for you, and thinks not an infinite Glory too great to give you, upon most easie terms, that even he comes to you in one of his necessitous Members, to see what you can find in your Hearts to bestow upon him; if you that have Estates think he deserves nothing, let him have nothing; if he deserve but a little, give him but a little; if your Lusts have more right to your Riches than he, then let your Lusts have them rather than he. Let Christ in his Members starve, whilst Pride and Luxury are maintained, if you think this be just. If you can improve your Estates better some other way, take what you think the most gainful course. For remember, Christ himself needs not any thing you have or can do, only he'll try the Kindness of your Hearts. His is the Earth, and the Fulness thereof, and even his poor Servants can he sufficiently provide for without you. Wherefore if you give not willingly and cheerfully, you may keep your Money to your self, for any good that an extorted Charity is like to do you. But remember also, you will be sure to lose and leave all that, which God hath not, one way or other; but by giving it to him you send it before you; and when all things here below fail, you shall enjoy it with



with infinite Advantage in the Everlasting Habitations. And let this suffice by way of Direction for your Preparation to, and carriage in Receiving. A few words for your Behaviour afterwards, and I shall come to a Conclusion.

## C H A P. XVII.

### *Directions for the Duty after the Sacrament.*

I. **W**HEN you come Home, get alone, and bleis God for the Liberty and Opportunity of a Sacrament, which he hath afforded you, and for all the Priviledges that are thereby conferr'd upon you. And let your Souls chew the Cud, and retain the Savour of those pleasant Things you have been entertained with; keep them still lifted up, and exceedingly gladdened, in the sense of that Love which you have this Day been celebrating and tasting, in the Belief of that Pardon which you have received, in the Hope of that Grace and Glory which have been assured to you. Meditations of Heaven, and the exercise of Thankfulness, are now very proper Works. Consider also what you have done, what an Obligation you have laid upon your self, how you are no longer your own Man, having made a Resignation of your self to God by Jesus Christ: And beg the Assistance of his Holy Spirit, to enable you to Stedfastness and Perseverance in this Holy Covenant, whilst Life shall last; and beseech him, that the Ordinance you have been made parraker of, may become effectual to your Souls to all those Ends that it was designed for, and which are attainable by it. *Think it not enough to read over these Things, I intreat thee, but do accordingly; and now betake thy self to Consideration and Prayer*

*Prayer to those Ends I have exprest.* Review moreover, what your Miscarriages have been, and humbly beg of God to forgive either want of due Preparation, or Coldness and Distractions; that your Hearts have not been affected suitably to the importance and excellency of the Duty, and the Majesty of him with whom you have herein had to do. And be heartily thankful for any measure of Life and Affection, any raisedness and Comfort that God hath been pleased to vouchsafe you. And here by the way let me caution all humble Christians to beware of a Mistake to which they are too prone: To wit, to judge of their profiting in this and other Duties by their present feeling, and so to think they get no good, except their Souls are as it were lift up, and ravish'd with sensible Joys; and these only they take for evidences of God's Acceptance, and the having of Communion with him. But by this means you will often plunge your selves into needless Sorrows, and load your selves with unjust Censures; and which is worse, you will hereby become less thankful to God, as thinking you have received little Advantage, because you found not those Delights you expected; and will be in danger of becoming weary of the Work, and ready to throw it off, as thinking it unprofitable. Wherefore to avoid these ill Consequences, and the Mistake that begets them, consider well, *That it is the uprightness and sincerity of your Hearts in the performance of your Duty, which may administer most ground of Comfort to you when you reflect upon it:* For be assured if you have this Ornament, you were really acceptable to him that look'd down upon you, though this Acceptance might not be testified with the giving in of any extraordinary Joy. Let it not then trouble you, as if God was not well pleased with you, because your Affections were not raised up to an higher pitch; since he doth not look so much at fits of Passion, as at the steady Bent and Tenour of the Soul. Nor think because you miss of great Joys, that you had no Favour from, nor Communion with  
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God: For consider again, That the truest Communion with God, is to enjoy the Communications of his Grace to your Souls, whereby you are made conformable to him: And you may enjoy these saving Influences of the Spirit, when you cannot feel his more abundant Comforts. Moreover, the Fruit of this Ordinance is not so much to be discerned at present, as in your after-Conversation: For the great Benefit you are to expect, being to receive farther Measures of Grace from the Holy Spirit accompanying these Means, it cannot be well known what Grace you have received, till you come to the exercise of it, when Temptations shall assault you. And to allude to the Apostle's words in another case, though this Ordinance may not at present be joyous, yet it may afterward yield the peaceable fruit of Righteousness, to those that are conversant therein. And lastly, if you are but sincere, as I said, in your Covenanting with God, it is your Duty to believe, that you have this day received from him a Seal to the Promise of Pardon and Eternal Life, and in this Belief may you take much rational and solid Comfort, which otherwise you are not like to find: And this is the ordinary way whereby the Spirit conveys Comfort to the Soul, first working in you a belief, that the Promises of God are in themselves most true, and enlightning you to the knowledge of your own Souls, and the enabling you to apply these Promises to your selves, as being such to whom they belong. Thus the Apostle tells us, their rejoycing was from the Testimony their Conscience gave of their Simplicity and Godly Sincerity, 2 Cor. 1. 12. Wherefore, you are not so much to expect any extraordinary immediate Assurance from the Spirit that you are the Lords; but see to get good grounds for your Faith, and so to have your Hearts fill'd with Peace and Joy in believing. Yet do not misinterpret what I have said, thence to indulge your selves into any Sloth or Dulness, to content your selves with the bare doing of the work, without heeding the Frame of your Heart therein: No, but take  
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as much pains as you can, to raise them to the greatest Sensibleness and Affection; and if you do so, you may reasonably expect to find much sweetness and satisfaction in the Work it self: But my meaning in this Caution is, that you should not look so much at the feeling of extraordinary Comforts, as at the Integrity of your Hearts in vowing your selves to God, and the continuing stedfastness of your Resolutions to be true to these Vows.

2. And that's the next thing I would exhort you to, *even to discover this inward Truth and Sincerity, by your future holy and exact walking*: This is that which must crown all the rest. I may lay to you as *Moses* to the *Israelites*, Deut. 26. 16, 17. *You have this day avouched the Lord to be your God to walk in his ways, and keep his Statutes; and the Lord hath avouched you to be his peculiar People, and you have promised to take Christ for your Husband and Lord, to live in Love and Obedience to him, as you hope to be saved by him.* One thing now remains, *that you go and do likewise.* Say with the Psalmist, *I have sworn and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous Judgments*, Plal. 119. 106. Now you have been remembering him *that suffered in the Flesh*, arm your selves with this mind, *no longer to live the rest of your time in the Flesh to the Lusts of Men, but to the Will of God*, 1 Pet. 4. 1, 2, 3. Let it not happen to you according to the Proverb, *The Dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the Sow that was wash'd, to her wallowing in the mire.* If God have spoke Peace to your Souls, turn not you again to Folly. Call to mind particularly what Sins you confess and promised to forsake, and do accordingly. You that have been guilty of Drunkenness or Gluttony, Fornication and Wantonness, Pride or Covetousness, be so no more; you that have been wont to spend your time in Idleness and Vanity, in sinful Company or excessive Recreations, spend it so no more; you that have been wont to give way to your exorbitant Passions, and suffered them to break forth in unseemly

seemly Actions and Language, do so no longer. You that are Masters or Servants, Parents or Children, Husbands or Wives, consider well what particular Duties your Relations call for, and be faithful in the performance of them. You that are Subjects, obey them that are set over you in the Lord. Towards your Neighbours, and all with whom you converse, be just and honest, loving and courteous, avoiding all Backbiting, Lying and Slandering, all foolish and filthy Speaking. Be compassionate and charitable to all that need your help in one Tort or another. Be conscientious for the future in the more immediate Service of God. Be frequent and serious in his Worship, both in publick and private, alone and with your Families. Beware of Swearing and Cursing, or of taking the holy Name of God, or Christ, in vain; make not mention of him in your common Discourse without due Reverence, and that you are not like to have, if at every turn you are crying, *Oh God* and *Oh Lord*, as is the custom of careless People. Profane no more Lord's Days, as you may have formerly done, but improve them to your Souls good. Whatever Talent you have, of Wealth, Wit, Time or Honour, employ it to his Glory who entrusted you therewith; in all things study to please God, and so commit your selves and all concernments to his Will, and quietly submit to all his dealings with you without murmuring or repining. To a sincere endeavour after all this, you have bound your selves by the Sacrament, where you have taken God to be your God, and have profest your selves his People. Wherefore, I beseech you, beware of that dangerous, and yet too common Mistake, *To think this weightry action terminates in it self, and that all's done when the work's over.* I have endeavoured all along to prevent this false Conceit, and I care not how oft I inculcate it: For if this be not removed, all my Labour will be lost, and so will yours too, yea, and worse than lost: Your receiving of Sacraments will then prove but an idle unprofitable Ceremony, and will help

help forward your Damnation rather than your Salvation, whilst you heed not the Design of it, nor improve into its due End. What would you think of that Woman, that when she had promised a Man to be his Wife, and was solemnly Married to him in the face of the Congregation, should think there was now nothing more required of her, but that she might go whither she list, and live with whom she pleased? Even just such is your Folly and gross Absurdity, who when you have been in the most solemn manner engaging your selves to God, and have taken the Sacrament upon it, that you will live in Obedience to him, then think that you may go away and live as you list. Beware how you make such Mistakes as these; for believe it, God's in earnest whether you are or not. If you would not have him take you at your word, you had better never have made such fair Promises. Since then the great design of this Duty is, to be an engagement to, and an help for Holiness of Life, I shall finish this Treatise with a Direction or two for the promoting and carrying on the same.

1. And to that end first let me advise you, *to be frequent in considering the Engagement you have hereby laid upon your selves, and let that hold and quicken you to Faithfulness.* This is the principal thing which we are to do in order to the due improvement of Sacraments to our Advantage, even to remember often, what a strict Covenant we thereby entred into, that by remembrance thereof we may be the more aw'd and restrain'd from doing any thing against it. Thus ought you to make use of your Baptism, which is, I doubt, too seldom minded; often you should think, how absolutely you are bound to take him for your God, to whom you were so early devoted, remember the end of it, and now see to answer and attain it, which you may find fully express'd, Rom. 6. 3, 4. *Therefore are we buried with Christ by Baptism into his Death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by (or for) the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of Life.* When-



Whenever you see a Child Baptized, let it bring to your mind, that you were once so dedicated to God, and admitted into his Church; and then think how you ought to walk, who have such a Bond upon you. And thus improve the Lord's Supper, where you have personally owned, and renewed your Covenant with God. Especially make this use of it when you meet with any Temptation to Sin whatever, or when you begin to grow careless and remiss in your carriage. If old Companions should set upon you, and entice you, or if your own Heart should incline you to any former sinful courses, then say with your selves, how can I do this, and go back from the Vow that I have made? No, I must not, I will not; the Oath of God is upon me, and I shall be forsworn with the living and true God. How severely will he avenge himself on all such dissemblers? Wicked Herod seemed so fearful of Perjury, that he permitted the murdering of a Prophet to avoid it, and shall I be guilty of it, rather than destroy my Lusts, God's and my own greatest Enemies? Most justly may I argue, that for my Oath's sake, and for those that sware with me, I will not do thus: For not one of my fellow Communicants but might witness to God against me, that they saw me make a Covenant with him. And God himself who stood over me will be Witness as well as Judge. How then should I appear before him with this heinous Guilt upon me? Wherefore, *Depart from me, ye evil Doers, for I will keep the Commandments of my God.* If you'll come along with me, and walk in the holy Path, come and welcome; but never hope to draw me back again with you, into those ways that have cost me so dear, and which I have protested against. I am now no Company for you: *For I have taken the Sacrament.* Depart Satan, and tempt me not from my Allegiance to my Lord and Master, I will not forsake him; I have obliged my self afresh to be a Christian, a sworn Enemy to thy Kingdom, and a faithful Souldier under Christ's Banner, therefore depart from me: *For I have taken*

*taken the Sacrament.* And think moreover with thy self, Hath God been so gracious to me as to vouchsafe me a Pardon for all former Transgressions, and to seal it to me at his Table, and shall I go, and wilfully run upon the score again? Should I thus turn his Grace into Wantonness, and abuse his Patience, how justly might I fear that his Anger will be kindled against me, and that he will no more have Mercy upon me? He, I am sure, will be true to his Promises, and shall I be false to mine, and so fall under his Threatnings? And after this manner quicken your selves to Duty, whenever you are apt to grow listless to any part of God's Service; and also quiet your Spirits, when they are ready to rise up in tumult and discontent under any cross that befalls you. Then think, *I have resigned my self to God as a loving Father, let him do with me what he please; therefore be still my Heart, and rebel not against, nor murmur at his righteous Will.* If you can but thus find your selves more strongly bent against Sin, and better able to put off Temptations to it, this is the surest evidence you can have of profiting by the Sacrament.

And beware of imagining, that any space of time can wear out the force of that Obligation, which is here laid upon you; which, as unreasonable as it is, one would think was the opinion of multitudes: For they'll be very demure, and solemn a little before they go to the Communion, and a day or two after, but within a very little while all seems forgotten, and they are just such as they were before. But for certain, God forgets not their Promises, though they do, nor will he forget their breach of them, as they will one day find to their cost, if they take not another course. The Bonds you are entred into to render Homage and Obedience to God, will never be cancelled: For this is a Debt you will owe as long as you live, though you are always paying it. Baptism will be as strong an engagement upon you to Godliness when you are sixty, as when you are but sixteen. And the same strictness the Lord's

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Supper binds you to for a day, to the same doth it bind you all your days. Think not what an horrible thing it would be to run into Drunkenness, Whoredom, or Quarrelling, the same Day you had received it, and know your Sin is little less hainous, tho' it be a Month or two, or twenty after it : For this breaks your Oath as well as that. If the Wife be guilty of Adultery Twenty Years after Marriage, her Crime is as great as if it had been within a Week after ; for she had oblig'd her self to Conjugal Fidelity, as long as she and her Husband should live ; and thus your Covenant with God is not for a Month, or Year only, but for your whole Lives. If you should never but once have Opportunity to receive the Sacrament, this would ever after remain a forcible Engagement upon you : But yet God in his Wisdom and good Providence hath ordered, that this Duty should be frequently repeated, that it might the more work upon, and affect your Minds, who are prone to be so forgetful and dull. Remember then the matter is now out of your hands ; you have given away your selves to God, and cannot revoke this Gift, since indeed you gave him nothing, but what was his own before. *After these Vows there is no inquiry to be made,* whether they should be kept or not. Yet, thus much I'll say to you, if you can find a greater Portion and surer Friend than God, a better Master than Christ, better Work than his Service, better Wages than Life Eternal, you may take your choice : For I would wish you to nothing for your hurt or loss, nor doth God, you may be sure, that blessed Being, who wants nothing out of himself, nor envies his Creatures any thing that is truly good for them : but till you can thus better dispose of your selves, keep your first Love, and if you will keep it till then, I shall never question your perseverance to the last.

And as you are thus to improve this Ordinance to quicken you to, and help you in your Duty, so may you make advantage of it for your Comfort, by remem-

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bring how God stands engaged to you by that Covenant to which he hath here set his Seal, and which he will be sure to perform to you that depart not from him. With this Consideration repel all Temptations to excessive Doubtings and Despair. When the remembrance of former Sins is ready to overwhelm you, have recourse to your sealed Pardon, and confidently take the Comfort it affords you. When you find the remnants of Corruption yet so strong within you, that you are afraid you shall never hold out, remember the Holy Ghost is in Covenant with you to assist you in your Combat, and will bring you off Conqueror, if you throw not away your Weapons: And let this encourage you the more to beg his Assistance; yea, in all your Addresses to God let it strengthen your Faith to apprehend him, as in Covenant with you. And if you are surprized by any Sin, yet whilst it's matter of Grief and Shame to you, and you are resolv'd to be more watchful for the time to come, let it not cast you into such a Sorrow, as tends only to disquiet and consume your Spirits; but remember God hath assured you, through Christ, the forgiveness of such Weaknesses, and they shall not put you out of Covenant with him; but know, if you are hereupon a whit the more encouraged to any Sin, it is a very great sign that this promise of Pardon at present belongs not to you. In a word, whatever Difficulties you are plunged into, relating to Soul or Body, let this still uphold you, to consider, that God hath engag'd himself to be with you in all Estates and Conditions, and to order all things so that the issue of them shall be for your Advantage. And thus by a frequent Consideration of your own Engagements at the Lord's Table, and of the Priviledges thereby conferr'd upon you, you will find your selves not only comforted and cheared, but very much advantaged for the walking on more steadily in the ways of Holiness.

2. And to the same end my next Counsel is, *That the Lord Jesus, whom you have here been remembering, may*  
*ever*

*ever be fresh in your Thoughts.* Let not your remembrance of him be confin'd to Sacrament Seasons, but let him ever dwell in your Hearts by Faith and Love. Set his Example before you, and labour *to walk as he walkt, who counted it his Meat and Drink to be doing his Father's Will.* Behave your self as you believe he would have done; was he in your case. Consider how meek and lowly he was: How little he regarded, yea, how much he contemned the Riches, Honours and Applause of the World, and learn you to value them at the same rate. Consider how patient he was in Suffering; how courteous and gentle to all, to the vilest Sinners; and his bitterest Enemies, doing hurt to none, but seeking the good of all: Copy out this Lesson also. Willingly deny your selves, take up your Cross, and follow him. Grudge not to be conformed to him, though in Suffering it self, and complain not till you are in a worse case than he was, who had not where to lay his Head. It's like you think, if Christ was on Earth, you'd follow him, though but in company of poor Women and Fishermen; and though the most of the World should laugh at you for so doing; why know, he'll take it as well at your hands, if you will but tread in his foot-steps, and adhere faithfully to his interest, though it should cost you the loss of all you had, and of Life it self. And let the *Death* of Christ be much in your Thoughts; let the Love of God which was herein shewn, be your daily, delightful study, and ever leave a sweet Tincture upon your Spirits, that by the Power of Love you may be moved and carried on in the whole of your Duty: Let this Shame drive you from Sin, let this make you laborious and unwearied in his Service. When you are set upon by a Temptation, lay so long as to set a bleeding Saviour before you; and think how you have much such a case now before you as the *Jews* once had; to wit, whether *Christ* or *Barabbas* should be preferr'd; whether your Lust should be subdued, or your Lord crucified afresh: If you approve of the *Jews* choice in

this case, you had best imitate them. If that which would murder your Soul deserve to be spared, rather than he who dyed to save it, then go on, give Christ a *flab*, and sin boldly. Consider farther, how Christ by his Death hath acquired a title to you, so that you must glorifie him both with Body and Soul, as being not your own, but bought with a Price. *Hought* you are, not out of the hands of the Father, that you should now have liberty to sin against him, but out of the hands of Satan, that being free from Sin, you may become *Subject to God, and the Servants of Righteousness*. How wilfully blind are they who take the more liberty in Sin, from the consideration of that Death, which was undergone to *redeem us from a vain Conversation*? 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. Where's that Man's Reason and Ingenuity, who when he was fallen into his Master's Displeasure, and brought into Favour again by the great Industry of the Son, should think he might now safely disobey his Master? Though the Son pitied the Servant so much, that he was loth to see him perish, yet he loves his Father so well, that he never purchas'd an allowance for his Disobedience; and indeed the Servant's *Disobedience is his Destruction*. Christ dyed once to save the penitent, but he'll never dye more to save those that remain wilfully disobedient. Consider also, Christ by his Death hath purchas'd abundant Grace for the supply of all your wants, and now being at the Father's Right-hand, hath full power to give out of this store; wherefore make use of him to obtain the same. Even as the *Egyptians* received Food from *Pharaoh* by the hands of *Joseph*, so much you receive all you have from the Father by his Son Jesus. Let then the very *Life you live in the Flesh, be by Faith in the Son of God*. By earnest Desires vented in fervent Prayers, be ever deriving Virtue and Vigour from him your Head. Be as desirous and craving as you are necessitous, as hungry as you are empty, that the good God, according to the Riches of his Grace, may furnish you with all plenty of Spiritual Blessings, till



till you shall come up to the measure of the stature of Christ's own fulness, Eph. 4. 13. *Red bad now also and*  
 3. If you would thus grow in Grace, Be diligent in the use of all the means of Grace which Christ hath offered, and let them be used and improved as means. You must, I have told you, be much in earnest Prayer to God in the name of Christ, for whatever you are wanting in. Let not one day pass without the Practice of this Duty; you that have Families call them together, and pray with them Morning and Evening. If you neglect this, how little do you differ from those Heathens who call not upon God, and upon whom he will pour out his Wrath? Be diligent in attending to the publick Preaching of the Word, and prepare your selves beforehand, with a resolution to obey what shall be made known to you to be the Will of God, and beg his Blessing on what you hear. Consider when you come home, wherein you are particularly concern'd in what you have heard, and accordingly follow it; setting against that Sin, or upon that Duty, that you are thereby convinc'd of. When you can get Time, spend it in reading God's Word, and good Books, which may explain and enforce that Word. Especially you that have not much Time on Week-days, spend the remainder of the Lord's day, after Publick Worship, in some such good Employment, and waste it not in Idleness: No, nor an hour at any other time. Read also to and with your Family, and ponder it afterwards, that it may be more profitable to you. Often discourse one with another, about the matters of your Souls, soberly and seriously; that you may afford each other what Help you can. It would be exceeding well, if when you sit with your Neighbours, you would be thus employed in holy favourable Conference, to the use of edifying, rather than in idle chattering and talking of Persons, and things that concern you not. But especially they who are of the same Family, and are more nearly related, have more Opportunity and Engagement hereto, and should be

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*admonishing one another daily, and provoking to Love and good Works.* For the Lord's Supper, I have already directed you at large, and I hope you will practice answerably, and be frequent therein, not ordinarily neglecting any Opportunity when you are call'd to it. But as I desire you not to neglect these Exercises of Religion, so on the other hand as earnestly I would wish you to beware of resting in them, as thinking all Religion is confin'd to them, and so becoming less careful of your Carriage, as to Justice, Temperance, inward Piety, and all vertuous Actions. Methinks the wretched Error of those Sects that throw off all external Duties of Worship, and cry up themselves as above Ordinances, may reach this wholesome Lesson to all professing Christians, to beware of resting in these things, and framing to themselves a Religion out of them. These I grant are parts of Obedience to God: for he hath commanded them, and they are ways for the exercise and increase of our Graces, and to be as helps to Godliness; but to think that they give any discharge from the Practice of Godliness, and make amends for Sins we are loth to leave, for which we do as it were compound with God by these Formalities, making Sin our Pleasure, and his Service a Penance for it; these are Conceits so gross, that methinks none but a Papist, or one willingly ignorant, should entertain them. Religion is no road of Performances, but a new Nature attended with a new Life: It is the Subjection of the Soul to the Will of God, expressing it self in all commanded Acts of Obedience; an eager and ingenuous pursuance after the blessed God in all those ways wherein he is to be found, and whereby he communicates himself to the Soul of Man; so that there is no contradiction betwixt inward Holiness and outward Duties, but much what the same relation, that there is betwixt Life and Eating, Breathing and Motion: For in these the Divine Life is express, exercised and nourished. But to think that Sacraments, Prayers and Hearing, &c. may serve turn  
without

without any inward Holiness and universal sincere Obedience, is as if a Man should think, that the forced motion of a Puppet, should make it pass for a living Creature; that great Promises may pass for Performances, and that knowing what we must do, and talking of it, may serve instead of doing what we are taught. Let them lay this seriously to Heart, who, when their Practices are ungodly and loose, think to save all by keeping their Church, and saying their Prayers: and all such who make more ado about the Externals in Devotion, than about the right ordering of their Hearts and Lives, whereas all our Devotions should tend to better these.

4. If you would make good the Promises you have made at the Lord's Table, to live a strict and godly Life, you will find it of singular importance, yea, of flat necessity, *to retain a great watchfulness over all your ways.* Ever keep up a sense of the danger you are in, by reason of the frailty of your Nature, the deceitfulness of your Hearts, and the many Temptations you are every where exposed to; and therefore let this Care secretly run through the whole course of your Actions, to beware of being surprized by Sin therein. In all Employments, Companies and Affairs, still keep up this watch, and think before-hand, where your Danger is greatest, where you are most apt to be over-taken, and there place the strongest Guard. Set a Watch over your Eyes, Ears, Appetites, Tongues, Hearts and Hands, that you be not by them betray'd into any miscarriage. When you find your self endangered by a present Temptation, then have some solid Reason ready at hand to repel it, with store whereof you should always be furnish'd with Reasons drawn from God, Christ, Heaven or Hell, or from your Sacramental Engagements, as I shewed before; and be sure, have a strong resolution to check the first risings and beginnings of Sin, before it have gone so far, that your Judgment is brib'd and blinded by your Affections, and have speedy recourse to the God of all Grace, that he would send you Help



from above. *Consideration, Resolution and Prayer*; are three Weapons wherewith the Christian Souldier may do wonders against the tallest Sons of *Anak*, that shall assault him in his way to *Canaan*. Often take account of your selves, and review your Behaviour in Actions that are past; and let one days experience still teach you how to live the next better. But upon the sense of any miscarriage, let not your Guilt drive you farther from God, and put you into unprofitable Vexations and Horrors, but presently make haste to the Throne of Grace; get your Peace made with God thorow Christ, and renew your Watch with more diligence than ever, but always with the most humble and absolute dependance upon Divine Assistance. 'Tis too probable; that some lazy wretches will here fly out, as *Naaman* in a rage did against the Prophet, when he heard he must wash seven times in *Jordan* for the Cure of his Leprosie, which he thought would have been done with a word speaking; so perhaps you'll tell me, that you had thought receiving of the Sacrament would so have killed your Lusts, and cleansed your Hearts, that you need have been at little care about them afterward, and will be ready to ask, what good you get by it, if you must take all this pains notwithstanding. You slothful Souls, may you not as well ask what good you get by Christ's Death, and the giving of the Spirit? Since notwithstanding both these, you must take Pains, or else you are never like to be saved. For know, God will have you employ the Faculties he has given you, and the Work of Grace is to heal your Faculties, and enable them for their proper employments. He that made you reasonable Creatures, will make you holy and happy as such, and the Help which he affords, is to bring you to diligence, and assist you therein, and by that means to save you. Thus Sacraments are only profitable to the diligent and industrious, their use being to quicken and strengthen, but they are no Refuges for the slothful, no Encouragement to Idleness. Never think that God will make such a way to Heaven, that you  
may

may walk in it without using your Legs. 'Tis you that must do the things required, though it be by Christ strengthening you, for whose sake also your Faults are forgiven. Wherefore let me renew my Advice, that at all times, and in all things, you would be watchful, and maintain an holy Jealousie over those Hearts, that have too often shewn what they have in them. Take this for the greatest Work you have to do in the World, to beware of Sin, and to be careful to please God, as the Souldiers whole work is to serve his General, and the Servants to obey his Master; yea, more absolutely than to ought a Creature to study his Masters Will, and account this work your greatest Happiness. So avoid Sin, and all occasions and appearances of it, as you would do the Plague in a visited Town; and be as careful to watch all Opportunities of doing Good both to the Souls and Bodies of others, as Men ordinarily are of laying hold on their Gain. Often ask your selves, wherein God is honoured by you, or others profited, and be ashamed to live to no better purpose than to eat and drink, to sleep and dress your selves for work or play. And do not object against this constant watchfulness, that it will take up all your time, and hinder your necessary Employments: For by using it a-while, it will grow even natural to you, and will no more hinder you in your affairs, than it hinders a Traveller in his journey, to take heed of running into Bogs and Ditches. Is it any hard matter to be always careful, lest you should hurt your Bodies? Wherever you are, and whatever you are doing, cannot you keep up this care, and yet follow your Business well enough? Why then can you not take the same heed of your Souls with as little trouble or hindrance?

3. To keep you in this watchfulness, and guide you in an exact circumspect walking, it will be exceeding profitable for you, at all times to retain upon your minds a very awful sense of the presence of the most holy God. Whatever you are about, remember he observes you, and

and ponders all your Paths, though you perceive not him. Wherefore always order and behave your selves as before him. Speak your Words as in his hearing; spend your Time, and do all Actions as in his sight. You may easier run from under the Heavens than out of his Eye. And consider he do's not only look on you, but narrowly regard you, and concern himself with you, being highly displeased when you run into sin, and takes delight in your holy Conversation. In whatever company you are, be not drawn away by them in a kind of flashy humour, as if the general looseness and jollity did engage you to conform to them, but remember, God is in the midst of you, who never gives you a Dispensation to be wicked, and whom it more behoves you to please, than all the World beside, though avoid all enflaming Company as much as possible. Let this keep you from fear or shame, when you are call'd to speak against Sin, or for God and Holiness: *He's near that will justify you, you may therefore set your Face as a flint.* When you are alone, think not you may sin the more securely: For God is with you, and eyes all your motions, as if he had none but you to mind. In your Addresses to God, a sense of his nearness will much awaken and affect you, and is one of the best Helps against wandering Thoughts that you can have. Beware of being so far swallowed up with the noise and hurry of Business or Pleasures, as not to attend to him that stands over you. He that is present every where should be remembered at all times. Read to this purpose *Psal. 139.* Such a powerful habitual sense of a present God should you work into your Minds, that you may walk as before him, even when you do not actually think of him: as a Servant is all day doing that work which his Master would have him, though he may not half that time be thinking of him: So though it be needful that you should often actually think of God, yet above all, see that you never forget him, as to do that which is displeasing to him: And, to conclude this, in any doubtful action let this



this be one Rule that you go by, not to do that, which whilst you are about, you dare not boldly think of God's Presence.

6. The last thing I shall say to you for the carrying on of an Holy Life, to which you are bound by the Sacrament, is, *That you be much in serious Meditation of the last Things, Death, Judgment and Eternity.* The frequent and lively Thoughts of these will have a mighty influence upon your whole course. To consider your latter End, is both a discovery of, and the way to Wisdom. Live every Day, as he that knows not whether he hath another Day to live. Think often, *What if I had but another Month or Year to spend in the World, how strictly and holily should I then live that time? How careful should I be of my Thoughts, Words and Actions? How thrifty of my Time? How serious and affectionate in all my approaches to God? How ready and willing to do or receive good? Why let me now live after this exact manner, since it may be I have not so much as a Month or Year to come.* However very much I am sure I have not, and my Preparations, be they never so soon, will not be lost. Let others Funeral put you in mind of yours; and flatter not your selves with the hopes of long Life, because you are young and healthful; but see to get your Souls in such a condition that a long Life may not be so much the matter of your Hopes, nor Death the cause of your Fears. And remember, you are always going on to the Judgment-seat of Christ, where you must have a tryal of ten thousand times greater concernment, than those that die to come before Earthly Princes and Judges; when the Case must be decided where you must live for ever, whether in the highest Joys, or the sorest Torments. Had you not need then now to be getting a good cause: For according to the Life you led here in the Flesh, will that Sentence pass, *The wicked must go into Everlasting Punishment, and the Righteous into Life Eternal.* The God who sees you now, will judge you then by Christ the Redeemer. Think what a Life you shall

shall wish you had led, when you come to the end of it, and must be judged for it, and lead such a one now. When the sugar'd Bait of Sin are presented, and you have much ado to hold off them, then think what bitterness it will be in the end; compare the Honey with the Gall, the present Delight, which is vanish'd in a moment, with the Sting and Pain which endures eternally, and then judge and act like reasonable Creatures. But above all, let your Thoughts be even steep'd and swallowed up in the pleasant Contemplations of that Glory, which shall be revealed in, and bestowed upon *upon us,* the Lord Jesus. Whenever you are ready to faint and give out, remember the Joy that is set before you, and let that remembrance cheer and revive you. Consider what that Goodness is, which God hath laid up in himself for them that fear him, till you find your Love enflamed towards him; and let your Love put you upon more frequent thoughts, and earnest longings after him. Only see to fill up all your Time with suitable Actions, and then let it even please you to see your days pass away so fast. Always keep it on your Thoughts, that you are in a Journey to a glorious Kingdom, and be often saying, now I am one Day, or Month, or Year, nearer than I was before. Stretch out thy self with a longing look towards thy Father's House, shortly I shall be in the Arms of my dear Saviour, and shall be joining with Saints and Angels in the triumphant Praises of Jehovah and the Lamb. And remember this Happiness consists chiefly in being made perfectly holy, and therefore here must that Grace be sown and grown up, that shall then be ripened into Glory. And the more holy you are, the nearer to Heaven will you get whilst you stay on Earth, and the meetest for it will you be when you are taken off from the Earth. Ever keep up such a sense of the excellency of this future Blessedness, as may blast all other things in your esteem, and deaden the Temptations that are taken from Pleasures, Riches and Honours. O think how perfectly provided for must he needs

needs be, who shall have God for his portion! How mad are they that would lose the least hope of this Happiness for the whole World? And they that look for such great things, *what manner of Persons ought they to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness?* O let nothing weary you, or turn you out of the way. Hold out a while longer, and you shall be plac'd out of the reach of all Temptations for ever. Fasten upon nothing on this side Heaven with any great delight or long stay: But still tell your selves, it's time enough to be happy when God shall take you to himself, so he will but here vouchsafe you that converse with him, whereof we in this State are capable. Let every thing you meet with be as a step toward Mount *Sion*, and raise you nearer to Heaven, and make you more desirous of it. And when you have been thus meditating and preparing, waiting and desiring a-while, you shall assuredly find, that your Labour was not in vain. Wherefore let such Considerations as these make you stedfast, *unmovable, always abounding in your Lord's work, till at length you should be translated into his Joy.*

And thus I have dispatch'd those Directions I promised for the promoting of Holiness, which was the last thing I had to do. It now remains, that we set our selves resolutely and sincerely to the practice of what God hath revealed to be our Duty; which if we do, we need not doubt of his Assistance and Blessing; but upon your perseverance in well-doing, to which we have obliged our selves, may, through our Mediator, confidently expect his gracious Acceptance, and his glorious Crown.

*Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of his Sheep by the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will: working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory for ever and ever. Amen. Heb, 13. 20, 21.*



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